DIGITAL PRESS

THE Bio-degradable Source for Videogamers

#43: replay.

replay.
editor's BLURB by Joe Santulli

My friends, THIS is what Digital Press is all about. A complete is-
sue dedicated to games that either pay homage to, or attempt to
duplicate, the games of our youth. This issue is just the first in a se-
ries of issues that will cover this subject—we didn't have nearly
enough space to get in everything we wanted, and with emulation
and "classic" compilations growing by leaps and bounds, you can
be sure that we're just at the tip of the iceberg here. This is a good
thing, of course.

There are so many ways to play the games of yesteryear, but to
this day, I prefer playing on the original system. You can't duplicate
the "feel" of a game, using the controller it was designed for, or the
monitor, speaker, and orientation that it was built to take advantage
of. I don't like playing arcade games on my PC at all. I find myself
checking out games that I never had the chance to play in the ar-
cades, but when it comes to a game I know and love, I have no de-
sire to spend time with a keyboard or PC joystick to play it. Console
gaming is a little better—at least we're all huddled around the televi-
sion. Still, nothing quite matches the thrill of the original.

We all have opinions about emulation, and many of them are ex-
pressed in these pages. We also checked out some notable compi-
lations and re-makes but barely scratched the surface.

Don't forget that the Classic Gaming Expo is coming up soon!
Check out page 7 and register early! Most of us will be there again,
looking forward to meeting new gamers and catching up with old
ones.

Until then...

Invaded by the past
By Joe Santulli

A little collage of "vintage" Atari
2600 games make up this familiar
character. It's symbolic—
everything you play today re-
minds you of something else,
doesn't it?

READER RETALIATION

that website of yours

Hi,

Do you know that your front page takes like 5 minutes to load? You've got about 50 animated banner ads and icons slowing things to a crawl. I've got a 56k modem and as soon as I click on your address things just slooow down. Could you possibly consider paring down the front page to something faster? Also, are you going to add anymore old print articles to the archives?
Jason
jtmazure@oakland.edu

I hear that! The DP website was originally created just as a repository for our archives—a place to keep old columns and graphics. But due to demand I've had to learn to maintain it like a "real" website.

So recently I got rid of all those advertisements and counters and made the interface as basic to use as possible. You'll see a drastic improvement in load time if you check in now!

As for adding archives—yeah, that's happening on a regular basis. Check in often for updates.

getting misty

Hey Joe,

Long time no talk. Myself and the rest of the Fogdoggers have been busy building this little ecommerce site and going IPO. Life is beginning to calm down, so I'm trying to make time to smell the virtual game roses.

I've read through the six back issues of the newsletter I bought, and am eagerly awaiting your next issue. Seems like it's been 5 or six months! But my greatest thanks to you is the emotional kick to the heart I get reading yours

and your readers stories of the happy memories video gaming has brought during different parts of their lives. I've literally gotten misty eyed and extremely melancholy as I flip through the pages. Shit, I think I'm getting in touch with my feminine side. My wife married a softy!

I could ramble on, but i'll save it for another email.

Take care and keep in touch,
Jeff Helfand
Fogdog Sports

Jeff, we're a pretty melancholy bunch too. Why, just the other day, John Hardie was describing to me the deep playability of the Atari 5200 game Countermeasure. As I started to doze off, I accidentally spilled a beer into the cartridge slot. I've never seen a man weep so openly over such a duration of time. Fortunately those tears became tears of joy when I drained the thing out and popped in Countermeasure to show him that everything was going to be OK.

So feel free to bawl. We're all softies here.
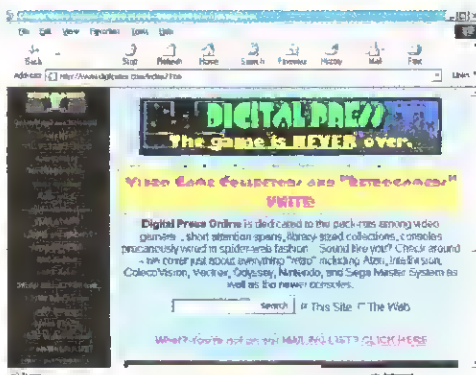
The new DP website has a *much cleaner (and faster running)* interface. Try it out!

hasbro galaga

Dear Joe,

As a subscriber to the update list, i just wanted to send out a huge *thanks* for the info/link to the Atari HQ site featuring Hasbro's new Galaga update. My girlfriend and i have routinely played and loved Galaga for many years, we even own the arcade upright. Hopefully Hasbro will incorporate the original Galaga code and hide it somewhere in the PSX or PC versions. If it's as true as their Q*Bert and Pong updates we'll finally have a great new Galaga and the classic with accurate sound!

Jeff Prescott
Last-tycoon@excite.com

Just one of the many benefits to being on our electronic subscriber list! That, plus you'll always know when my hard drive has crashed. And you'll be right on top of the latest excuse for why Digital Press missed it's bi-monthly schedule!

We're looking forward to Galaga too. Hasbro's efforts have been hit or near-miss, we have high hopes that this will be their best update yet.

If you're reading this and you're not on the internet list, make tracks to http://www.digitpress.com/mailform.htm and sign yourself up. It's free!

file under
general questions

Dear Joe,

I just wanted to let you know that I received the package of video games in the mail today. Thanks so much, I can't wait to play them! And an extra thanks for including a complimentary issue of the Digital Press as well. I have truly been missing out! I really liked the design on it. I have a BFA in Advertising Design (which, unfortunately, I am not using; I'm working in a coffee house at the moment), so I appreciate good design; I can tell it's not just slapped together willy-nilly.

Glad you're enjoying it - it's more than just a project to me and the gang here at DP, it's a necessary tool of the trade! I use it every day.

I've got a few questions, if you could find the time to answer them:
Know where I can score a C-64 Kickman cartridge? I've wanted that game forever, and i've had bad luck getting it in the past, the one time I ordered it from a guy, it didn't work. I know they're not terribly hard to come by, nor too expensive; I just thought I'd ask you in case you know a good place to try.

That's about as common as C-64 carts get. I can't get rid of the things, they're like TRIBBLES! I'll send one along to you.

Along those same lines, do you know where I can find a copy of the instructions to Music Construction Set for the C64? I have the disk and would love to know how the program works inside and out. I've wanted a good music composer for the C64 for years... I've been composing tunes for the C64 for years, just using the basic music program in the user's manual, and i've only been able to progress just so much; hopefully with this program i'll be able to do bigger and greater things.

Don't know exactly what is or isn't there, but the best resource for c64 manuals by far is

http://project64.c64.org/ - a must see if you own a c64.

Searching your website the other night, I just discovered the existence of the Starpath CD... Do you have any idea where I can get one of those??

There are two different supercharger projects: 'stella gets a new brain' is by cyberpunks and features all of the starpath stuff, including prototypes on one cd. I don't have their website but a quick search on the net should turn either cyberpunks or stella up with their site. Lee Krueger is the mastermind behind the other one which is a collection of atari 2600 games on cd that load thru the supercharger, there are actually two sets of cd's now called 'worship the woodgrain'. Check this out at http://www.resqsoft.com

Do you know the addresses of Midway and Konami? I would love to fire off some letters to them to recommend some arcade games to include in any future Sony Playstation compilations. For example, Midway could do Tron, Discs of Tron, Journey Escape (was it they who did the arcade version?), Satan's Hollow, and Kickman (I seem to be on a big Kickman "kick."). For a 3rd Atari collection (Midway did those cds too, right?), I'd love to see Red Baron, Gravitar, Warlords, I Robot, Kangaroo, and Food Fight. But what I really want is a second Konami Arcade Classics; the first one is incredible! More than anything I want to see Amidar (my all time favorite arcade game) and Tutankham, with Strategy X thrown in for good measure. Can you think of any great games by those companies that I missed? (probably.)

You didn't need me for the websites, did you? Easy, http://www.midway.com and http://www.konami.com. As for missing games... What about Konami's Contra or Tutankham... And Midway's Satan's hollow and Wizard of wor? Favorites of mine...

Finally, I'd love to start getting those back issues I'm missing. How much would issues #1-20 be, along with the latest edition of the price guide, and a subscription? Let me know and i'll send off a check as soon as I get paid, whenever that will be. I really enjoyed the issue you sent, good stuff! It caused quite a conversation at the coffee house in which I work.

The best part is that even if you spill coffee on the book, the "apocalypse-ready director's cut" cover will simply repel it! I'm not kidding—just TRY and destroy it.

Thanks,
Kevin Mcon

K8track@winco.net

warlords variation?

Hey, I was just glancing at the cover on my Dig.Press Guide (Edition 5) and I noticed a box for 2600 Warlords with different artwork than i've ever seen before. (slightly to the left of center) It still is the orangeish-yellow color with the white letters in the classic Atari font, but the picture shows a knight facing toward the viewer, visor down over his face, and plumage from the top of his helmet. Behind him, to his left, a castle tower can be seen, and a red,white, and orange flag that is triangular instead of rectangular. Is this some prototype artwork, or did some boxes actually make it onto store shelves with this art?
  Kyle Snyder

We've gotten a few inquiries about that one, but we're not pulling a fast one. That's the cover that was meant for the Atari 2700 version of Warlords. In fact, there were several boxes' artwork completed while the system was being spec'ed out.

Worship the Woodgrain: Y2K Edition

ResQsoft has recently announced the availability of the 2nd edition of the Worship the Woodgrain (WTW) CD collection for the 2600. WTW is a collection of nearly 400 Atari 2600 games designed to play on your Atari 2600 using a Starpath Supercharger,. It is important to note that these games will not play on an emulator. The first edition was limited to 50 copies. The 2nd edition of WTW is designated as the Y2K Edition. The Y2K Edition is also a limited release. Meaning that about 50 copies will be made available as well. Based upon demand, more might be made available, however, they will not contain the limited Y2K Edition badging.

The 2nd edition includes many new games that were not available for the 1st editiion. Highlights of the Y2K Edition, include some ultra rare games that are not even available as binary images yet on the net. Two of the most notable titles include Bumper Bash and Out of Control. The Y2K Edition also contains 2 new unreleased prototype games that are not available anywhere else yet. They'd like to tell you about them, but you are going to have to buy the discs and find out for yourself.

Why every 2600 fan would want to have this collection. The idea behind "Worship the Woodgrain" is to put fun games in the hands of collectors, at an economical price, that is easy to use. This compilation is professionally produced so your wife (spouse, significant other, etc.) will have a hard time complaining about it sitting next to their stack of Mozart CDs in the family room (or maybe you are into Motley Crew or the Grateful Dead.. whatever..) In any event, WTW is not a "hack" job. Most folks who, would otherwise have an extremely difficult time putting a ROM image on a cart, now have a chance to play these games on a real Atari 2600 with all the appropriate accessories. Ever try to play 4 player Warlords on an emulator? There are also many collectors, like us, who own a warehouse full of Atari 2600 carts, but find it a real pain in the keester to sift through them to find the game you want to play. Additionally, many games are next to near impossible to acquire (if at all, like one-of-a-kind prototypes). Then there are those people who do not have a computer or internet access. This CD compilation is for ALL you folks.

Where to buy: They are available directly from ResQsoft. Email: ResQsoft@earthlink.net Web: http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft

Or write them at: Lee Krueger 21312NE 10th Place Redmond, WA 98053

Costs: $50 + shipping (1/2 the price of the available multi-carts with nearly twice as many games. No dip switches to mess with either)

What you get for your money: 4 professionally packaged CDs in a jewel case with cool color inserts and a color manual. The CDs contain nearly 400 Atari 2600 games.

Please check the WTW FAQ for more information: http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft/wtw.htm –

ResQsoft Research & Technology: http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft Check out the Atari 2600 CD Compilation for play on your Supercharger: http://home.earthlink.net/~resqsoft/wtw.htm
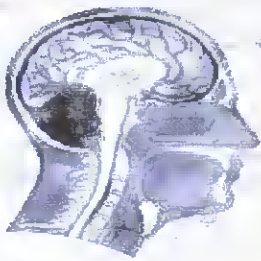
MORE Bits & Pieces
by Al Backiel

I have received two more answers to the questions that I posed in DP #33:

The first question was "*Do the* **Crypts of Chaos** *have a final screen or exit?*" The answer according to the programmer John Marvin, whom I contacted via email follows:

"Sorry NO, there is no ending. It just gets harder as you go down. In that way it is more like an arcade game than a modem RPG. As simple as **Crypts of Chaos** is. It filled the 4K ROM we had to ship it on. Interestingly, there are a total of 128 bytes of RAM on the VCS. So that explains the lack of much of the stored information in most of these games. You either go forward never to return (e.g. **River Raid**), or you see a lot of random encounters (**Crypts of Chaos**)."

The second question was "*How does one uncover the easter egg in* **California Games**?" Answer courtesy of the programmer Steve A. Baker, also contacted online:

"Hold DOWN on the second controller while you do the "air turn" on the first controller. Every time you land it will show SAB. Your final score will still be correct."

I offer our readers the above info on **CoC**, because who wants to spend a lot of time seeking the impossible. The game is still entertaining and worth playing to achieve a higher score or to access a lower level. I did have some qualms about revealing the ending to another RPG… **Dark Tower**. This great Vectrex game was saved from extinction by our own Sean Kelly and is available on multicarts. Some gamers might prefer not to know how it ends up, but would rather figure it out for themselves. As a compromise, I have decided to encode the solution. Those who don't want any hints should ignore the cipher. For those that want to know the answer right now, here is the code:

GSVXLIIVXGLIWVILUGSVPVBHHVVNHGLYVYBRMXIVZ-
HRMTEZOFVGSZGRH

YIZHHYILMAVHROEVIZMWTLOW.

Here is what you have to do to decipher. First make a copy of this page, so you won't ruin your issue of DP. The above code is a simple letter substitution or cryptogram. Write down the alphabet from A to Z on a piece of paper. Then, write the alphabet backwards underneath that so that A = Z, B = Y etc. The top letters will be the plain text. The letters below represent their values in the code. All spaces and punctuation have been removed to conceal the words. Write the substitutions atop each letter. Use slashes as needed to separate words. To get to the enter the final screen, one still has to collect all the objects and approach the castle door. This solution worked on Game 4 (easy level), and I believe it applies to all the other levels. I still haven't found that elusive Crystal Crown that was mentioned in the instructions. If you find it, write me.

There is a minor glitch (pun intended) in **Miner 2049er** (Vol. I) for the 2600 which I call "quicksand". After powering up, hit reset. The game will start, but don't move. Hold down the fire button The miner jumps up and down . While still holding down fire, hit reset. Wait a couple of seconds for the extra miners to disappear. This time the remaining miner will fall through the ground and get stuck. Sometimes he will be buried halfway and at other times up to his neck. I don't consider this "frying" as you are not flipping the power on and off. So this should be safe. Here is something else you can try. On screen III. Pick up all the charges, jump in the cannon and fire. You will have so much velocity that you will go off the screen. When you come back into view you will land splat on your head. OUCH! Neither of these tricks will gain you any points. But, they are interesting effects nonetheless.

Keep your eyes pealed when in the cereal aisle of your favorite supermarket. I have picked up free PC CD-Rom demos of **Tiger Woods' Golf** (Wheaties) and **Toy Story 2** (Post Cinnamon Toast). Demos are promotional items that allow you to play a few levels of a game to peak your interest. Once in a while Pizza Hut gives out PS-X demos. You can also get free demos by always sending in the registration cards for games and systems or by subscribing to video game magazines. I love getting free shit! So far the only complete game that I have seen free with cereal was **Chexquest** (Wheat/Rice/Corn Chex). Want the sequel? You must own the original. Write me. The sequel is no longer available at their website.

There is a German punk rock band calling themselves …Atari Teenage Riot.

Steve A. Baker's website is http://www.cruzio.com/~sabweb/arcade (no ~ use %7E instead). Steve has written a bunch of video games in Java and you can play them there in real time.

Best of Both Worlds

What Emulation CAN and CANNOT Deliver
by Dave Giarrusso

Some things just can't be recreated.

DaVinci's Mona Lisa. Michelangelo's David. The original lineup of Van Halen. The original "Trix" cereal. They are one-of-a-kind things that, no matter how good technology gets, no matter how good our artists (culinary included) become, can't be duplicated. They were born not only of the artists' souls, minds, and bodies, but also of the various times in which they were created. The Renaissance. The death of disco. The inundation of "sugary and proud of it dammit!" kids' breakfast cereals.

We can also add "classic" arcade games to our laundry-list of stuff that just can't be recreated.

Emulation is amazing. I love the fact that I can plug a CD into my Playstation and get instant access to pixel for pixel, sound for sound perfect versions of lots of my favorite classics: Tempest, Marble Madness, Crystal Castles, Super Pac-Man, Gaplus, Blaster, Bubbles, Robotron: 2084... I can play Robotron on my Nomad during boring holiday flights and horrific layovers. I gladly purchase all of these games the second they hit store shelves, and will continue to do so. (Except for those two Activision piles of crap - they couldn't emulate their way out of a damp paper bag. Activision: Please STOP!) With emulation powers at an all time high, one might think that trips to the arcade were nearly obsolete.

Not us though.

We still venture out to the arcades. We NEED to in order to play all of these glorious games as they were originally meant to be played. No matter how good emulation is, no matter how perfect the monitor the games are played on, something is still missing — that little extra something that only the arcade experience can provide.

For starters, games like Tempest and Crystal Castles just aren't playable using the standard Playstation controller, and unfortunately, it doesn't seem likely that anyone will ever produce a trackball or a paddle for the 32 bit disc spinner. (Wasn't some company planning to release a PSX trackball about a year or so ago?) You can still load them, and stumble through the earlier rounds of each game, but come on, there's just no way to get Bentley's groove back without that trackball. Ever try to mow down a row of gem-eaters with the D-pad? It's about as easy as using the same D-pad to mow your front lawn. Other specialized controllers fly out the window as well when games head to home consoles: Pole Position, Paperboy, Super Sprint, Spy Hunter, Tapper... Without a steering wheel, bicycle handlebars, or beer taps, these games are shadows of their former selves.

Even in instances where no specialized controllers are necessary,

for example, Pac-Man, Dig Dug, or Galaga, the D-pad just isn't the standard red-ball arcade game joystick. It's not unbearable in these cases -- the D-pad does do a fine job of controlling the action (except for Pac-Man), but the arcade feel is gone. The home player is also sitting and staring at either a computer monitor, or a television, neither of which is analogous to standing in front of a five foot tall game cabinet. After matching wits with Missile Command for three hours, even veteran players have trouble shifting their weight back and forth in an effort to keep leg cramps from setting in. Cries of "OW! My calf!" are rarely heard while playing Missile Command sitting at home on the couch, unless the family dog happens to be extremely hungry and not very well trained.

Let's examine the best case scenario regarding emulation - the homemade, customized arcade cabinet with all the controls necessary to play the games of your choice. Lots of guys and gals have projects like this one in their basement or den, with PCs and monitors hooked up inside arcade cabinets with all the bells and whistles they need. Short of actually owning each and every arcade game you want to play, this route is about as close as one could ever get to arcade perfection without leaving the house. In fact, let's go one step further. Let's imagine that we have our own game room, filled to the brim with classic machines. We can now safely play these games day or night, in street clothes or in pajamas, without shelling out quarter after quarter after quarter. Perfect, right?

Wrong. It's close. Very close… but, something is STILL missing.

The arcade atmosphere — the sum total of all of the tangible and intangible things that make going to the game room an entirely different experience than bringing the game room home. The simple, almost magical act of depositing a quarter or token is no longer necessary, and even if it is, there's no feeling of "aw, jeeze, gotta make this quarter last," because the gamer owns the machine, and the same theoretical quarter can be removed and added as many times as necessary in order to continue playing. There's no gamble or anxiety over losing an entire week's allowance or paycheck at the hands of a game. In the home-game experience, all of the paychecks have been lost beforehand.

All sorts of arcade experiences are absent when the gamer plays in the comfort of his or her own home: broken games, lost quarters, found quarters, free credits, soda-drenched control panels, obnoxious kids and adults, loud noise and or music, lines of players waiting to take their turn, evil game room managers who crank the difficulty settings all the way up, bums begging for quarters... Gone. (Strange how our value system changes upon entering the arcade: a guy who asks you for a quarter on the street has a good chance of getting one;

Classic Gaming Expo 2000

Jackie Gaughan's Plaza Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada
July 29-30

Classic Gaming Expo is an annual celebration of the roots and history of the videogame industry. If your mind's eye can see you as a 10 year-old frantically tearing the reindeer-covered wrapping paper off a package from Santa revealing an **Atari 2600, Intellivision, ColecoVision** or **Vectrex,** then you won't want to miss it. Classic Gaming Expo is a place where memories such as these run free.

Feast your eyes on just a few of the special guests who attended CGE '99:

- **Ralph Baer** - Often referred to as the Father of Videogames as he designed the Odyssey I - the first cartridge-based game system.
- **Blue Sky Rangers** - The original group of Mattel programmers responsible for most of the Intellivision game library.
- **Activision Originals** - Steve Cartwright, David Crane, and Garry Kitchen were household names to anyone with an Atari 2600 in the early 80's.

- **Atari 2600 Programmers** - Dennis Koble, Steve Woita, Rob Fulop, Howard Warshaw, Bob Smith, Tod Frye, and Bob Polaro created some of the best VCS games ever.
- **Jay Smith** - Designed the Vectrex and brought the one and only prototype color version of the system along with him.
- **Electronic Games Magazine** - Amie Katz, Bill Kunkel, and Joyce Worley were the major players at the gamer's magazine of the 80's.

Most of these guests have signed-on for CGE2K, but special guests are only a part of what's happening at Classic Gaming Expo. There will be literally dozens of classic arcade games lining the walls and available for play, scores of vendors offering classic games for sale, game contests and tournaments, keynote speeches and roundtable discussions, and a museum boasting the most comprehensive collection of classic videogame hardware and software ever assembled.

Classic Gaming Expo is all about people. Meeting the people that designed the games you spent countless hours trying to master (all of whom were very approachable and more than willing to stand around and shoot the bull), meeting the folks you've gotten to know in your videogame dealings over the net and through the mail, and just hanging out having a good time. You read about CGE '99 many times in these very pages. You know you'll kick yourself if you don't find a way to make it out there this year! Imagine meeting most, if not all, of the DP staff...that's worth twice the cost of getting out to Vegas itself!

More information on the show and the festivities planned can be found on our website at

www.cgexpo.com

For exhibitor, ticket, or sponsorship information, email us at **info@cgexpo.com**

CGE '99 Sponsors Included: HASBRO Interactive nYko TELEGAMES NEXT GENERATION DIGITAL ECLIPSE SOFTWARE INC

Atari 2600   Ebivision   Maze

Fish lovers: please read John "big and tasty" Hardie's in-depth review

Element	John	Joe
Graphics	8	7
Sound	6	7
Gameplay	9	8
Overall	9	8

multi player same time			data save features
decent game ending			hidden stuff
variable skill levels			non-linear gameplay

How many times have you looked at the Atari 2600 version of Pac-Man and shook your head in wonder as to how this game ever got released? Most of us were just so eager to play a home version that we gladly overlooked the game's faults. Many classic gaming enthusiasts even point to this game as the beginning of the end for Atari. One has to wonder if things would have been different if Eric Bacher had worked for Atari...

Pesco - "what Pac-Man should have been" crowed the attendees of Classic Gaming Expo '99 where Eric and his company Ebivision debuted this fantastic game. Building on the experience he gained when he released "Alfred Challenge" at the previous year's World of Atari show, Eric set out to "right one of the major historical wrongs" in videogame history. Simply, he decided to build a better Pac-Man. And build he did! Eric actually created a picture perfect version of Pac-Man for the 2600 right down to the finest details including true-to-arcade gameplay and best of all, NO FLICKER!

Unfortunately due to legal issues, Eric can't presently release Pac-Man as much as he'd like to. So in an effort to get his creation into the public's hands, he made some changes. Pac-Man becomes Pesco the Fish, 4 Ghosts

become 3 Crabs, dots turn into plankton, a whole new maze is created and *presto*... Pesco lives!

Pesco is undoubtedly one of the finest games ever created for the 2600. The gameplay is truly superb and the attention to detail leaves little to be desired. Pesco consists of 9 levels of gameplay, but be warned getting to the last level is no easy chore. As you guide young Pesco around the maze, you have to evade Tribock the Crab and his two henchmen. You start the game with four lives and one objective, to clear each level by eating all of the plankton. You will also encounter four special clumps of plankton that glow in the dark and flash. This variety of plankton has more protein and gives Pesco extra power, allowing him to turn and eat the crabs. From time to time, special bonus seafood will also appear in the maze including seaweed, shellfish, and starfish. As you advance to the next level, the crabs move faster and become less vulnerable to the special plankton. This makes getting to the final level quite an accomplishment. In fact, Eric is offering a free game to anyone who can finish level 9 and then answer some questions on his web-site, www.ebivision.com

There are several details and issues that

Eric addressed that help make Pesco a valued addition to anyone's game library. The most important, in my opinion, is the collision detection. Forget about dying when one of the enemies barely touches you. In Pesco the crabs must be halfway on top of you before you perish. On a related note, speed of movement through the maze is correct - when moving through the plankton, you move slower than the enemies, but in areas where there is no plankton, you stay ahead of the enemies. The enemy AI is right on target also. The crabs actually have some intelligence when pursuing you instead of just wandering around the maze in pre-defined patterns. Finally, the control is tight, as it should be in a game like this. When you push on the stick the response is immediate which makes taking those sudden turns an easier task.

One factor that needs to be looked at when rating a game like this is the design and packaging of the game. While this usually isn't a consideration when dealing with a new Playstation or PC game, it certainly adds to the appeal of new games for classic systems. In this area, I'm happy to say that Eric and his Ebivision partner, Igor Barzilai have set the
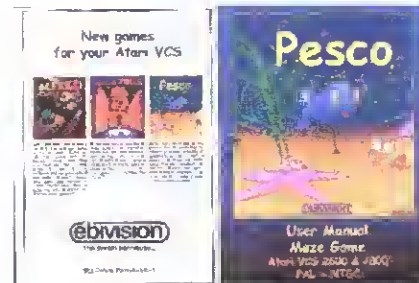
Hmm... kinda makes you wonder what went wrong with Pac-Man again.
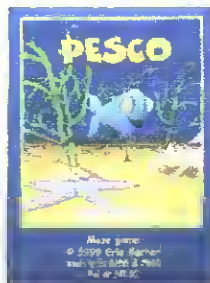
Pesco is French for "I like to have sex with crustaceans"

Ebivision went all out—the game even includes a full color manual!

Konami Arcade Classics

Playstation   Konami   Arcade

Joe Santulli finds ten new ways to have fun that DO NOT include sex!

Element	Joe	
Graphics	7	
Sound	8	
Gameplay	8	
Overall	8	

multi player same time	data save features
decent game ending	hidden stuff
variable skill levels	non-linear gameplay

It's important to note that you can store a PC arcade game emulator like MAME and over 500 full-version arcade game ROMs on a CD-ROM. And yet, I'm "excited" to see that for the first time, someone has put TEN games on a CD-ROM for the Playstation. It's hardly a bargain, but by today's standards, it's the best bargain out there.

Konami Arcade Classics contains the following games: Pooyan (a pig vs. wolves shooting game), Circus Charlie (precision jumping in various circus events), Shao-Lin's Road (a platforming punch/kick game), Roc 'N Rope (a Donkey Kong style game), Yie-Ar Kung-Fu (one of the first one-on-one fighting games), Scramble (a scrolling horizontal shooter), Super Cobra (ditto), Road Fighter (a Spy Hunter-style timed road race), Gyruss (a 360-degree shooter), and Time Pilot (ditto). Besides representing some of Konami's best early works, this is a well-rounded, varied selection of games guaranteed to please most every nostalgic player out there.

So KAC passes the first test: selection of games, but how does it do in the emulation department? Well, I'm quite pleased to say that this could very well be the best emulation

to date on the Playstation. Nearly every game we've played in other compilations has something in it that reminds you that you're not playing the original game: missing sounds, different colors, choppy graphics, etc. But not here. These games play fast, and they play the way we remember them. In fact, the games have been enhanced somewhat by the addition of the dual-shock controller's vibration feature! It's great enough to be able to finally play a good version of Gyruss at home but to have the controller rumble when you're hit is just the icing on the proverbial cake.

Sound and graphics all appear to be arcade-perfect. We play-tested this thing with at least six different gamers, and we couldn't spot anything missing. Of course, we didn't really have any Shao-Lin or Circus Charlie fans here (I'd never played either of these in the arcade), but between us we've dropped many a quarter into all of the other games. Take my word for it—this is as close to the arcade experience as you're going to come.

There aren't any bells and whistles here as we've become accustomed to in compilation disks. No interviews with designers, no

"museum", Not even any tidbits about the games themselves. All you get are the arcade games and a small info sheet explaining the basic gameplay and controls (like you would see on the panel of the machine itself). The lack of "depth" here knocks KAC down a notch in my rating of the game.

Sometimes these compilations are larger projects in the making, like Namco's Museum series or the Midway Arcade Classics set. Will this Konami set become part of a larger series? Well, if you consider that some really good early Konami games are missingm it's certainly possible to imagine another set of ten games on a CD-ROM. How does this line-up sound:

Amidar (a maze game), Jungler (ditto), Tutankham (a maze shooter), Contra (a platform shooter), Green Beret (ditto), Double Dribble (early basketball arcade sim), Blades of Steel (ditto for hockey), The End (Galaxian-style shooter), Strategy X (scrolling tank game), and Konami GT (early first-person driving game).
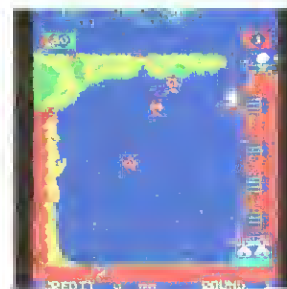
What do you say, Konami? I'm ready for KAC2!

Gyruss: more fun than a trip to Uranus.
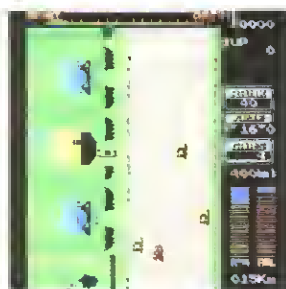
Road Fighter: more fun than ramming old people off the side of the road.

Pooyan: more fun than a bologna sandwich.

Genesis | **Taito** | **Arcade**

Review by Dave Giarrusso, guardian of all that is earthly.

Element	Dave		
Graphics	5		
Sound	6		
Gameplay	7		
Overall	7		

multi player same time	data save features
decent game ending	hidden stuff
variable skill levels	non-linear gameplay

We all know the story: Space Invaders was the first bona fide mega-hit arcade game, once causing corner-markets to convert to SI-filled arcades literally overnight in Japan. How many versions of "Space Invaders" have come to home gaming consoles since its auspicious arcade debut over twenty years ago? Oddly enough, about enough different versions to fill an entire arcade in Japan! Some of the home translations include, not even counting all of the various knockoffs, Space Invaders for the 2600, 5200, Gameboy, Super Gameboy, Color Gameboy, Transvestite Gameboy, Sega Genesis, Super Nintendo, PC, and Playstation.

SI'91 is a loose interpretation of the arcade update Taito released about eight years ago, called either **Super Space Invaders '91**, or **Majestic Twelve**, depending on where you played it. In this version, invaders from space have again deemed it necessary to conquer the earth, and the valiant gamer must thwart their attack. The first few screens even contain the original cast of invaders!

You'll never guess what's new in the 1991 version of SI. Powerups. New enemies.

Improved graphics, sound, and music. On the Genesis, some levels have divots in the surface of the earth, causing the player's ship to shift to a 45 degree angle when traversing the interrupted portion of the terrain. The main differences between the Genesis and arcade versions of SI'91 are the screen aspect ratios of each game (the arcade version has a vertical monitor, like the original) and the varying types of levels. Whereas the arcade game takes the player through lots of different, (on land and in the air) and sometimes hysterical (the infamous "Cattle Mutilation" bonus rounds) levels, the cow-hugger Genesis version remains grounded. The arcade game is similar to **Galaga '88**, while the Genesis version is more like, well, **Space Invaders**.

This game is a winner for plenty of reasons. It's not so far removed from the original (see **Frogger** by Hasbro or **Donkey Kong Country** for SNES to name just a couple) that it's SI in name only, but it also isn't TOO similar to the original, a la **Space Invaders Deluxe**. It has the "looks very easy, but isn't nearly as easy as it looks" hook that just captivates me for hours on end (**Anteater** is a perfect example of the looks-easy-but-isn't type of game).

You can sit down with SI'91 with the intention of playing it for fifteen minutes, but a quick glance at the clock after playing for a while reveals that over an hour has passed. It's just a fun game.

There are lots of interesting new gameplay twists in SI'91 as well. Hitting the center invader FIRST will re-energize your ship's shield. Invaders occasionally march in opposite directions on the same screen. Powerups appear that are extremely helpful, but that don't disappear too quickly or stick around for too long. SI'91 is a game that the player has to play WELL to get through.

Some game cartridges of days past are tough to scrounge up because, generally speaking, they sold poorly. Poor sales, were often, but not always, indicative of truly bad games, f'rinstance, **Fantastic Four** for the Playstation. **Space Invaders '91** for the Genesis is one of the exceptions to the generalization. If you manage to snag this cart, you'll be pleasantly surprised when you power it up. It may not have ever filled entire arcades, but as a good ol' **Space Invaders** game, it delivers.

New look, new terrain, new weapons... and it's already 10 years old!

CHEATER

Level select:
Hold A + C, then press Start at the title screen. Quickly press B, A, C during the short pause that occurs before the first level is displayed. A level selection screen will appear.
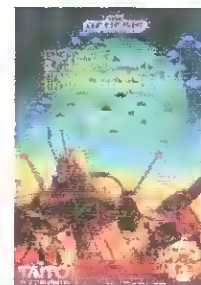
Pick it up if you come across it—this game is one of the best "remakes" of all time.

WILLIAMS/MIDWAY/ATARI GREATEST HITS

Playstation	Midway	Arcade

Mark Terry

Element	Mark		
Graphics			
Sound			
Gameplay			
Overall			

multi player same time		data save features
decent game ending		hidden stuff
variable skill levels		non-linear gameplay

It was back in 1980. That's when I was a sophomore in High School and Aladdin's Castle, the local mall arcade, was the epitome of a young boys hangout. (Next to the girls locker room) Games were laiden with quarters which meant the wait for Pacman was about 4 hours. Luckily there were other great games to play and more terrific classics-to-be games coming out over the next few years. The Williams/Midway Greatest Hits Collection series covers 25 titles on 4 easy to swallow Playstation disc. (Easy to swallow means $20 bucks or less for each) All of which bring us back to a time when it seemed okay to steal a buck or two from Mom's purse. These classic games take me back to a time where an arcade was more than just the "Kick-Punch-Drive" fest that they have today become. But games that were new and unique with their own charm and personality. Based on simple concepts and a priority to gamelay so addictive that I don't think any of us have completely recovered. Some of there titles are so strong in the annuls of game history that game companies are forced to pander to our ever growing band of Nostalgianites by revamping them into today's technologies. Many of these millenium renditions come from the very titles on the WMAGH I speak of.

The Williams/Midway series showcase some of the best of the older school games. Asteroids, Battle Zone, Centipede, Robotron, Missile Command and Tempest make up a small portion of these powerhouse classics. It also covers some of the "not-so-old school" titles like Rootbeer Tapper, Spy Hunter, Gauntlet and Paperboy. Almost all of these titles have contemporary conterparts. That should tell you something about the impact and staying power these games have both then and now. All sound, graphics and gameplay are intact and with one extra piece of hardware the trip back in time is complete. I highly recommend getting the Nyco Classic Trackball controller. It is a must for Crystal Castles, Centipede, Millipede and Marble Madness. The flashback factor with this accessory is a strong one. Especially Missile Command. This title holds a great place in my heart for so many reasons. First, I love the game. Second, it reminds me of a time in my life when

things were great. Third, I have scene the best of the best play it. One is an old friend of mine named Brian Wells who I would watch play and compete wtih other college students at an arcade in the middle of Boston. It was from him I learned the critical "Spread" technique imperitive in the upper levels. The other is DP's own Jeff Cooper. Jeff, his wife and then newbom som James met Scott Stone and I at the Funspot in New Hampshire. It was there I was witness to the best Missile Command talent that could be thought of. With a steady hand and unyeilding concentration Jeff defined Zen under pressure as he fended off the nonstop fury of ICBMs and Smart Missiles in an unriveled display of gaming prowess. Brian later took his gaming talent to General Computer in Cambridge Mass where he was a game tester for the home based systems the Atari 5200 and the yet to be released 7800. Jeff later went on to have another boy, Nathan.. I quess he does more that just play games.

Some of the other games in the series took a lot of my (I mean my Mom's) money back in yesteryear. Rootbeer Tapper was a fave of mine. I recall the time I had flipped the levels twice and showed no sign of stopping. I kept the onslaught of thirsty Cowboys, Sports Fanatics, Punk Rockers and Aliens satisfied well past the 100,000 point marker. And although I don't think I will ever get back that level of Soda Jerkin' Zen, I at least can revisit that experience on the Midway Collection 2 disc. This

It's a trip to yesteryear with these series—
what a long strange trip it's been.

compilation also brings us 3 not so recognized titles. Splat...a food fight done that saw no arcade time. Joust 2...a Joust 1 clone. And Blaster...a breakthru in gaming technology that proves that not all technology is a step forward but can be a stepping stone. Although these games don't have the passion or the following the other classics have, they do give you that new to you, deja vu feeling because they do have the same graphics and sound of the games from that time period. And like good 3 chord rock-n-roll, the one joystick two button games define the era of that time in games. Al the risk of sounding like my grandfather, "It's what we had and we liked it."

Each disc also have some very interesting extras ala Namco Museum. Trivia about how the games were developed and viewable color flyers that advertised and announced arcade releases. Video clips of the programmers who created these masterpieces. The hows and whys behind the screen look is facinating. The games alone are worth the price of the plastic so the extra tracks are like have 500 smart bombs in Defender...... An added bonus.

Overall these stories and opinions are the biproduct of these tremendous collection of games. In a split second the game can bring you back 20 years and remind you of the feelings you had as a youth standing at one of these games with a crowd of friends cheering you on as you played. You can't go wrong with any of the Greatest Hits Paks. They all contain memories that are in all of us. It is from my own experiance that makes me all to aware that I'm 20 years out of practice. But that is the beauty of it all. I can practice all I want to find the only dormant Zen inside of any of the clsssics. And it doesn't cost me a whole ton of quarters. And maybe I can relive old times and have a lot fo fun on the quest to find the Zen. All I can say is that Retro is alive and well and resides in my Playstation. Long live the Retro.

Arcade Party Pak

Playstation — Midway — Arcade

Joe Santulli, an innertube, and lots and lots of guns.

Element	Joe			multi player same time		data save features
Graphics	8					
Sound	7			decent game ending		hidden stuff
Gameplay	9					
Overall	9			variable skill levels		non-linear gameplay

The latter half of 1999 saw a barrage of "compilations", some good and some bad, but none as inconspicuous as Arcade Party Pak, the first Playstation compilation with nary a hint in its title at what's being compiled. In case you weren't one of the people waiting anxiously for this one to arrive, the titles are **Smash TV**, **Rampage**, **Super Sprint**, **Klax**, **Toobin'**, and **720**. If you know these games (and I expect you to), then you can understand better why they named this disk what they did. It's PARTY TIME, baby! Six games designed for multi-player mayhem, though **Klax** doesn't exactly seem to fit here, and only **Rampage** and **Super Sprint** allow for more than two players. Still, it's true to its name.

The interface is clean and simple, like most compilations. From the main menu you can choose which game you'd like to play or watch a few brief interview movies that give you a little background into the history behind each. The interviews on this disk were better (more interesting) than others to date. No discussions about "code". No diatribe about how "the corporation" held the creative process in check. And no "programmers on drugs" stories – at least none that made the

final cut here. Within each title you have a few options such as skill level, number of lives, and whether you want the high scores automatically saved to memory card. Click a button and after a thankfully brief load time, you're in the game.

The six games vary in faithfulness to the arcade versions. I believe these are all based on the original code (not re-created for Playstation use), but it's pretty obvious that some small changes were made. The most noticeable is in the frame rate of **Rampage**. The monsters aren't as smooth as they should be, and there's a certain dark quality about this game which you'll also notice in **Toobin'** and **720**. It's very likely that the color palette was stripped down a bit to gain some processing speed. It doesn't really affect the gameplay, fortunately, but you'll notice it right away if you've ever played these games seriously in an arcade.

Personally, the big seller in this game was **Smash TV**, which was done rather well on the Super NES a few years ago but hasn't had a decent incarnation anywhere else before or since. I'm delighted to say that the translation is excellent. Not flawless, but good enough to keep even the hardcore fans of this game happy. The frame rate is excellent, the graphics and sound are dead-on, but there's a few times when you get that "stutter" when too much is going on, and a few sound bites have been inexplicably removed. But it's smooooooth, my friends. And this alone makes the whole CD worth owning!

Other nice touches in this compilation: **720** controls better than you would expect. It replaces the trak-ball from the arcade with the analog controller. Fortunately, it handles the spins and speed quite nicely. **Super Sprint**

was a three-steering-wheel goliath of an arcade machine, and though I really miss whipping that wheel around (which you can do if you own a Playstation steering controller), again the dual analog is up to the task once you get the feel of it. **Toobin'** had some really weird control scheme in the arcade, basically like a "left paddle" and "right paddle", but that's been simplified greatly here – now you can paddle straight ahead or backwards with just one button, which leaves you less time trying to figure out the controls and more time pelting your partner with beer cans and exploring the various rivers. As for **Klax**, well, it's **Klax**. You love it or you leave it. It's done faithfully here, and includes the two-player head-to-head mode. I never really understood the two-player game, because it doesn't seem like your opponent is affected in any way by what you do on your side (unlike **Tetris**). It's more like two separate machines operating independently. Of course, you can still TRASH TALK, so how much of a head-to-head experience this is for you depends on how well you can taunt.

Go get it! Not only is **Arcade Party Pak** a welcome addition to a party, but it's also a must-have for your classic gaming collection!
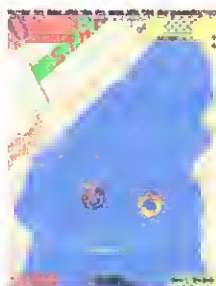
Take a friend down a roaring river with you—then pelt him with a beer can.
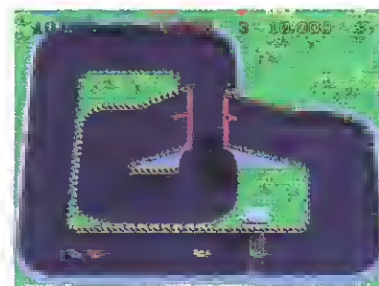
Though it's not the same without a steering wheel, Super Sprint still rules.

FROGGER

Majesco, for Sega Genesis

Okay, what's up with Frogger? The Seinfeld episode. Loose Atari 2600 Frogger carts selling for ten bucks a piece on Ebay. The Hasbro update for Playstation and PC--terribly reviewed but immensely popular. I can't pretend to explain it; maybe it's just a charming little game that everyone grew up with and it's finally getting its due.

The issue at hand concerns the Frogger release for the Sega Genesis, and I think the question on the minds of most Frogger fans can be answered in two words: arcade perfect. I played arcade Frogger in Florida a few months ago on what was yet another sign of this bizarre Frogger renaissance--the game was in one of those new cabinets that contains the big whippin' monitor and new joysticks, retrofitted with the original early 80s Frogger arcade program. Now I admit I didn't take notes or anything, but as best as I can tell the Genesis cart is the same as the arcade program in every respect. And I have to say that the Genesis version is the ONLY home version of Frogger that I've seen that appears to be arcade perfect. Genesis Frogger was one of the last releases for the system and was one of the last games to be widely available. So, you might still have some luck in tracking this one down, and it will probably be pretty cheap--a lot less expensive than the arcade classic, and it won't take up as much space in your game room, either.

A couple of final notes: I have not played the still-available SNES version of Frogger but I have been told to avoid it. Supposedly, it is NOT arcade perfect, and I'm told that it pales in comparison to the Genesis version. And by the way, do we know the name of the individual who designed and programmed the original Frogger arcade game? The time is ripe for him (or her!) to step forward and take a bow at the next Classic Gaming Expo.—Jeff Cooper

Xevious 3D/G+

Namco for Sony PSX

Let's cut to the chase: Xevious 3D/G+ is the best classic arcade game "update" available today. It figures. Namco gave it to us.

3D/G+ is every bit as good as the first Xevious, and every bit as good as other fun PSX shooters like Raystorm and Darius G. It's a perfect blend of original gameplay and updated graphics. It's a tough game - the player can't mindlessly crash and restart and continue through to the end of the game. (Unless that player cheats, and if you do, tsk tsk!) Unlike Hasbro's miserable Frogger update, but similar to Robotron X, 3D/G+ still LOOKS like the original Xevious. A gamer who is familiar with the original could easily pick this one out of a police lineup as the grandchild. 3D/G+ still FEELS like the original Xevious -- shoot (with the zapper) and strafe (with the blaster) the enemies 'til there are none left in your way. Even the hidden flags and towers are still here, along with the dreaded rings, mirrors, and motherships!

What sets 3D/G+ apart from the earlier incarnations of Xevious? 3D, polygonal graphics, of course. Powerups, naturally. Two-player simultaneous play. Faster, smoother gameplay. Outstanding new sound effects that really make the player "feel" the crunching demise of the enemy. A groovy new soundtrack that wonderfully compliments the gameplay, and even incorporates the original theme. (The surround-sound experience in this game might well be the best overall aural assault I've experienced on the PSX.) Heihachi and Paul from Namco's Tekken series. No foolin'!! Speaking of Tekken, there's even a cinematic intro that is vaguely reminiscent of the Tekken series opening movies.

The 3D/G+ powerups come in three flavors: blue, red, and green. The blue icon simply adds firepower to the zapper, increasing both the spray width and number of shots fired. Red icons switch the Solvalou over to an offensive system that launches homing, octopus-like tendrils of red (zapper) and yellow (blaster). Unlike the blue and green powerups, the red icon also affects the strafing capabilities of the Solvalou. Green icons yield the most powerful weapon of the three: big laser fire. As with many shoot 'em up games, the player must carefully decide which weapons are best suited to which sections of the game, and carefully avoid accidentally picking up the wrong powerup (often the red) at the wrong time.

Never a company to rest on its laurels, Namco has included both Xevious and Super Xevious emulators in this package, and as if THREE games weren't enough, there's also a "completely rearranged" version of the original, Xevious Arrangement, which also includes two-player simultaneous play. Casual Xevious players may not notice the differences between the first three games, but die hard fans of the series will easily spot the subtle, but very welcome, changes between Xevious (original), Super Xevious (slightly different, more difficult) and Xevious Arrangement. Arrangement boasts more detailed graphics, powerups (of the 1942 or Twin Eagle variety), and more outstanding music. The riff that plays when you meet the first mothership in Arrangement is downright frightening! (Note: it's supposed to startle the player, so that's a big compliment.) Shoot 'em up fans' game libraries are NOT complete without a copy of Xevious 3D/G+.

SECRETS!: TEKKEN CHARACTERS!! To play the game as HEIHACHI: highlight "START" on the 3D/G+ menu, then on CONTROLLER 1 hold LEFT, X, O, and START until you see the Solvalou change into Heihachi. To play as PAUL, highlight "START" and on CONTROLLER 2 hold RIGHT, X, O, START until the Solvalou becomes Paul. They even start out powered up! - Dave Giarrusso

Irem Arcade Classics

I'MAX for Japanese Playstation

It's so very difficult to review a disc with merely three games when one is one of my all-time favorites, one is merely average, and one is amongst the worst I've ever played. So here, in descending order, are the contents of this disc. Kung Fu Master. Most classic fans have played this one. If not, they definitely should have. Tho-

mas, a Kung-Fu Master, must battle five sons of the devil to recapture his love, Sylvia. Along the way, avoid falling balloons, pots, snakes, dragons, butterflies, and countless enemy clones.   Sounds dull, but somehow it all works. A precursor to Double Dragon, TMNT, Simpsons, Final Fight, or similar games where you battle a veritable smorgasbord of bad guys. Kung-Fu Master has aged well, and is arguably the best in this genre, for the simple fact that anyone can play, few can master, and high scores mean something since you cannot continue. Still fun after all these years. Zippy Race: Race from L. A. to Vegas, St. Louis, Chicago, and New York.   You're the only motorcycle in an all-car race who must collect fuel and dodge obstacles as well as autos. Nothing too special, but the city skylines are fairly cute, with recognizable landmarks. 10-Yard Fight: As someone here already put it, sports games do not age gracefully in video games. If you ever wanted to find a game that perfectly exemplifies this, check out 10-Yard Fight. Or, are you a masochist? Then 10-Yard Fight is for you! Let me put it another way.   10-Yard Fight is to Kung-Fu Master what Cool as Ice is to The Godfather. I'd probably rather spill steaming soup in my lap than play 10-Yard fight. Well, maybe not. But you get the idea. - Tony Bueno

Robotron X

Midway, for Playstation

The sky is blue. The grass is green. The greatest arcade video game of all time was, is, and forever shall be **Robotron:2084**. It just is. That's how these things work. Imagine my surprise and excitement then, when Midway announced that **Robotron X** would soon be available for the Playstation. Wow, 3D Robotron with some groovy new twists? What more could we want?

Hmmm. At the risk of sounding like I'm bashing this game, which I'm not, I actually like it a lot, better gameplay and more of the old-school Robotron feel would have been nice. There's just no real sense of urgency, of certain death, of blink and you're gone twitchiness that makes the original such a thrill-a-minute game. Perhaps that's why the CD doesn't contain the original game, even as a "hidden extra"?

The story (smart robots get too smart and realize that humans are unnecessary) and most of the characters have remained the same. In fact, the main differences are: a 3D environment, the addition of **Smash TV**-like powerups, bonus rounds where the player is attacked by waves of bees, additional family members (Gramps, complete with cane and white ZZ Top beard), and newer mutated versions of the original cast of evil Robotrons. Throw in the practically obligatory reworked-classic game techno-rave soundtrack first seen in the Jag hit, **Tempest 2000**, and you've got Robotron X.

Simply put, the game plays like a "heavy on the water, light on the sugar glass of Kool-Aid" version of the original. Veteran 2084 players will be able to quickly dispense with the first thirty or forty levels of 'botrons with the greatest of ease, and will have racked up tons of extra lives in the process. The powerups (shield, 2, 3, 4-way firing, pulse wave, speed up, and my favorite, flame thrower, along with a 1-up) appear in conjunction with special **Mortal Kombat** style moves made while the

player is evading the bad bots. Occasionally, Bill & Ted phone booth/time machine looking warpgates appear that randomly take the player forward (woo-hoo!) or backward (d'oh!) several levels. In 2084, the playfield is absurdly full of enemies, and once they are destroyed, no new ones appear. In the X update however, as robots are destroyed, new ones materialize to take their place until they've all been destroyed, and the later levels drone on a bit too long (I know, not unlike some of my reviews!).

What then, is good about this release? There's a neat little opening animation where the stick figure logo deposits a quarter into the 2084 arcade game. Lots of 2084's sounds have been included here. The graphics, now rendered in 3D, maintain the look and feel of the original, while adding new graphic design that merges well with the 3D look - be sure to watch all of the attract-mode character descriptions to get a really good look at them. The bonus rounds are a nice touch and even play an interesting, and apropos version of "Flight of the Bumblebee." The hero's name here is "Ugene," undoubtedly a nod to the brilliant creator of the original game, Eugene Jarvis. Finally, blasting robots is still fun, even if it isn't as "dangerous" as in 2084.

Robotron X is a good game, but it doesn't match the intensity of the original. If the game was simply called something else, "Wipe Out all the Evil 3D Robots!" perhaps, it would have avoided the 2084 comparison and seemed like a better game. As a Robotron:2084 update though, it falls a bit flat. Of course, when you're at the top, the only place to go is down.—Dave Giarrusso

Intellivision Classics

Activision, for Playstation

I need to modify an old saying here: "There are LIES, DAMNED LIES, and INTELLIVISION CLASSICS for Playstation". Because this game is the most heinous LIE any true Intellivision fan will ever see.

It's not bad enough that Activision bent us over and gave us Activision classics, another mis-represented "emulator" with 30 Atari 2600 games miserably plastered together. They have to stick it to us again—and this time it's much much worse if you can even imagine that's possible. Intellivision Classics does everything wrong.

To begin with, the sounds are just way off. The lively Intellivision music has been dulled and muted to extremes. If you've played any of these games on the real machine recently, you'll find yourself saying "what was THAT noise?" quite often while sampling these games. Of course, you may not be sampling very many at all unless you get beyond the miserable control scheme. For some strange reason on many games the buttons on the Playstation controller haven't been "mapped" to an Intellivision counterpart. Instead, you have to bring up a "menu", which freezes the game, so that you can select a button on a visual Intellivision controller that overlays the game screen. Why the designers didn't throw some kind of toggle & select routine in here I don't know—because this is the worst control idea I think I've ever seen.

Save yourself a few bucks and get the PC emulator Intellivision Lives! by Blue Sky Rangers.—Joe Santulli

ROMpage!
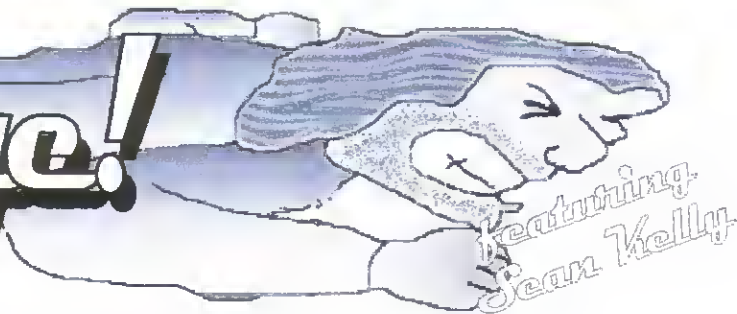
More Prototypes

Hey boys and girls! Did ya miss me last issue?? I'll bet that DP didn't completely fill that videogaming void like it usually does, but not to worry...I'm back!

Our theme this issue is emulation or something along those lines and I was thinking to myself..."self, didn't you already write about emulation in a previous issue?" I answered myself back. "Yes, you did write about emulation but it was quite a few issues back and since when do we adhere to the theme anyway??" I got into this lengthy discussion with myself, which got quite heated at times I might add, and in the end, we decided we should write about little furry animals.

Little furry animals are just so soft and fun to touch how can anyone resist them? Sometimes I find myself just petting and petting them until all their fur has fallen off into a big pile of lint on the floor and they are nothing but a bloody pulp - myself has a tendency to get carried away at times.

I'll bet you're wondering by now what the hell I'm writing about little furry animals for aren't you? Well, the real problem here is basically the same as it was last issue - nobody has really pissed me off of late!

My job here at DP has traditionally been to point-out the morons involved in video-gaming - both past and present. "See that guy over there? He's a moron! Sit back, tear open a fresh bag of pork rinds, and I'll tell you all about him". Luckily for us, and unluckily for my column, I haven't run into many in the past couple months so I find myself sitting here staring at a blank screen (myself has also been known to sit and watch ice melt, but that's another column) with nobody to warn you about.

Actually, there was this one guy about a month ago...

This guy is not a videogame collector - he's a "professional" eBay'er that ran across a very nice stash of prototype classic videogames. Included in his score were two previously undiscovered Intellivision games and prototype versions of several released Atari 2600 titles. I don't recall how the guy found me, but he got in touch with me and asked about having the games archived to preserve the data onto a more secure media (ala CD-ROM).

As you might expect, I was anxious to check-out the goods. I get a fair bit of mail from people asking about "prototypes" they have and the vast majority of them simply don't know what they're talking about so I was only about half-expecting something decent, but I was anxious nonetheless. I mentioned to him that it would be best if he sent them as soon as possible because of the possibility of bit-rot and he eventually sent them.

When I opened the box, the first thing I noticed was that these protos looked like they had been buried under 87 tons of dirty diapers for the last 20 years! They were disgusting! By the same token, they also looked quite "real". Some of the Activision titles had the standard solid red label that Activision slapped on many of it's prototypes although the color of the labels was very difficult to judge considering their condition. I started plugging them in one by one and sure enough, they were the real deal.

The two Intellivision titles were **Robot Rubble** and **League of Light** - both of which I thought to be undiscovered as of yet. There were several different revisions of **Robot Rubble** and, I believe, at least two copies of **League of Light**.

One version of **Robot Rubble** seemed the most complete of the lot and I played it for a while. The game was fairly unique and I enjoyed it for the most part. You play a standard "running dude" who's running along the bottom of the screen trying to avoid the robots laser fire while tossing some sort of grenade at the robots above. The longer you hold-in the fire button, the further the grenade goes so it was a skill to be mastered in getting the distance right. For bonus fun, sometimes your grenades didn't quite hit the robots dead-center so it would only damage them and they would quickly re-assemble themselves if you didn't toss another grenade up there to finish him off right quick. In later levels, the robot would have one of his buddies helping him smoke your ass so the action got quite hot and heavy in trying to avoid fire from two robots who eerily seemed almost intelligent in the way they were very protective of each other. Not a bad game at all!

League of Light, on the other hand, was almost certainly drug-induced. I have yet to figure out what the purpose of the game is. It's some sort of 3D perspective tunnel-traveling thingus. You have no character on-screen to control yet in front of you there is this tunnel of sorts that's comprised of multi-colored blocks. The disc, sometimes, controls movement in the tunnel and it seems you are supposed to help your non-existant character avoid the sides of this tunnel. As you might expect, I crashed into the walls virtually every time within the first ten seconds. I don't know whether the game is incomplete, I'm an idiot that can't figure out how to play, or there actually is no point to the game and some sicko programmer still occassionally chuckles when he thinks of someone trying to play his game.

There was also a sprinkling of released Atari 2600 titles in various

stages of development. Most only had minor graphic differences from the released versions and I didn't find them all that interesting.

So back to our "hero" that found this stuff. After I had gone through the stuff, I got in touch with him and told him he had some really cool stuff here that could fetch a decent buck. He even had several copies of most of the games.

Naturally, I went after one copy of **Robot Rubble** for my personal collection to which he responded that he wasn't sure he wanted to get rid of them so that deal wouldn't be possible. I had mentioned these protos to a couple friends of mine one of which noticed an auction on Yahoo for Intellivision and Atari 2600 prototypes. The starting bid was $1,000,000 (yes, you're seeing the correct number of zero's there). It seems my "buddy" thought I was stupid and I didn't know there were these websites out there that allowed you to post items for sale - or better yet, for auction. You know, eBay and the like. Apparently he's the only one that knows about these places and I'd never find-out he'd listed that auction. Lucky for him I'm too stupid to find places like that on the internet...otherwise I might have been pissed that he was trying to blow smoke up my ass.

When I call him on the Yahoo auction, the tone of his emails quickly changes. No, no, no...he's not selling them. He's just trying to see if anyone would be interested in them. I mean it's a very distinct possibility that even though there are over 5000 auctions on eBay for Atari, Intellivision, and Coleco stuff, nobody would want this shit he'd found.

My advice to him is to end the Yahoo auction that's currently making him look like an asshole and keep quiet about them for a couple weeks. Let people forget about the moron that thinks he's found the Holy Grail and come back with them in a few weeks on eBay - one at a time though! I tell him that many people into classic gaming know me and that if he were to allow me to help him devise a strategy for selling them, he could probably do much better than he will as some schmoo that nobody has ever heard of. Mr. eBay knows better than me, but, here again, he's trying to be cautious with his words because he's starting to get a little worried that I might not send his stuff back for some stupid reason. The guy's obviously an asshole, unfortunately though, that doesn't give me the right to steal his stuff as much as I wish it did.

It's kinda like people that drive like assholes. There truly should be a national "Smash Into an Asshole" day in which you're allowed to take out some piece of junk car and just crash it into people that don't know how to drive all day long. I've had dreams about a day like that! Same goes for my prototype buddy here...if only he had sent them to me during national "Steal Stuff From Someone That Doesn't Deserve It" week, the stuff would have been mine. He was apparently without a calendar and was concerned it was that week so seemed fairly paniced that I wasn't going to send his stuff back even though I would never consider that. I ran with it and made sure I DIDN'T do anything to reassure him I wasn't a thief.

One of the friends I mentioned the prototypes to was Keith Robinson of the Blue Sky Rangers. I had dropped him a line to see if he knew anything about the two titles. Keith said he already had a copy

of **Robot Rubble** but hadn't heard anything about **League of Light** and would like to get a copy of it but he wasn't willing to take-out a second mortgage on the house (Keith had seen the Yahoo auction also) for it so he was going to check around with his contacts and see if he could locate one of his own. I mentioned this to our hero and suggested that he offer a copy of League of Light to Keith at a reasonable price (like $150-$200) which would satisfy the BSR's, keep Keith from going out to find more of them, and then he would still be the only one with a copy of **League of Light** available making it a bit more valuable. This was before I had sent back his stuff though so he tried to pacify me saying that he'd seriously consider the idea but I should just send them back right away because he "misses them".

So I've read-in all the data and I box-up his games and send them back but I forgot to toss-in the CD-ROM with the back-up of the data. When he gets his box back, he goes off on me. Because the CD with the data was not included, I am to delete all the data off of the CD (hello? I didn't think you could delete stuff from a CD-ROM) and destroy any copies of the games I had. Does that mean I have to smash the cartridge I made to play **Robot Rubble** from? Ummm...I don't think that's going to be happening anytime soon but he did say to delete the files from the CD and the only CD I had was his. Since I couldn't delete them, I had to snap his CD in half to be safe. Hey...I was only doing what I was told to do.
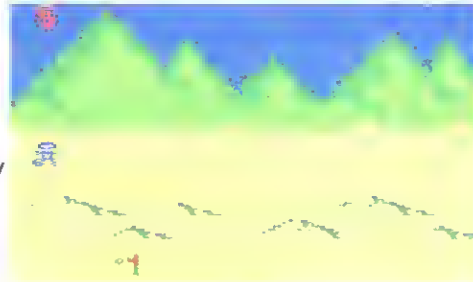
Robot Rubble prototype

Now he's full-blown into "I have found the Holy Grail" mode and is threatening (yikes!) legal action and everything. He's telling me how I'm just a "baby" because I didn't get what I wanted and that my idea about offering a copy to Keith Robinson at a reasonable price was just my way of trying to kiss Keith's ass to get stuff out of him. He tells me all about how bit-rot is just a line of bull I fed him to get him to send me the carts and how Keith never really had **Robot Rubble** until I'd sent him the data. If we could go back to the national holiday concept for a moment, the same holds true here. Even though I would have liked to, I said I wouldn't distribute the data and just because the guy is an asshole, that doesn't mean I get to go back on my word. I have the data to several games I've read for archiving purposes that I would like to distribute but I can't because I said I wouldn't. Several of these people are assholes too so let's just hope that we can vote-in a "You don't have to honor promises to morons" day!
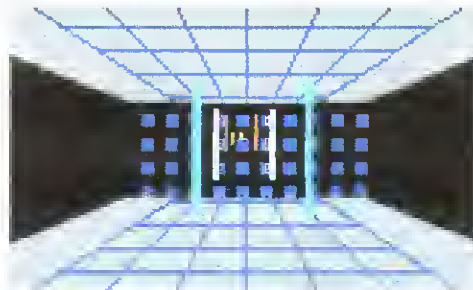
League of Light prototype

The bottom line is that I got exactly what I wanted from him - the data is now preserved! Sure I would have liked a cartridge for my collection, but I can certainly live without it and I'm not going to sell my kids into slavery to get one. I get sick and tired of these people that have no clue what they're talking about telling me I'm wrong. I'm referring to bit-rot here. While I don't want to get too technical, in a nutshell, what it means is that the chips that prototype games are stored on WILL eventually start randomly losing their data. The data is stored on them with an electrical charge and the estimated shelf-life is around 15-20 years. In case you haven't heard, this is 2000 and these games were made in the early 80's. Do the math yourself and get the data backed-up! If you have the means to do it yourself, please do so. If not, I can do it or send them to Santa if you want, just archive the data somewhere it will be safe. When the chips start losing data, your game will no longer work and without a backup, it can't be restored.

That prototype you've been hoarding so you can have that warm and fuzzy feeling about being the only one to have a copy will be worth a whopping ZERO!

Anyway, he continued to ramble on about all sorts of other py-scho bullshit. For a while it was amusing but in the end, I had to remind him where his anal cavity is and ask that he deposit the cartridges there. I did, however, flag his eBay account to see what the Master eBay'er did with them. Sure enough...**Robot Rubble** shows up on eBay a couple weeks later.

Unfortunately, my buddy had a WebTV account and no real means of taking screenshots or scans of the cartridges. He took what looked to be a bad Polaroid of his TV playing **Robot Rubble** and the same of the cartridge itself. It's too bad, because I have these nice, clean emulator (ding! ding! ding! See...I'm adhering to this issue's theme!) screenshots he could have used. He had noone to vouch for the authenticity of the protos and nobody had ever heard of him so he ended-up getting around $400 for the cart. Not too bad I guess, but I know I could have done better with it.

So what's the moral of the story boys and girls? Well basically, send me all your protos right away! :) Seriously, two things. First, there's absolutely nothing wrong with trying to maximize what you can get for your stuff, but use your head. I don't do baseball cards at all and I have no real contact with that "world". BUT if I found a rookie Nolan Ryan, I'd certainly enlist the help of someone that knows more about that stuff than I do to help me in doing the best I can with it and I wouldn't mind at all sharing the loot with them. Second, get your protos backed-up - NOW! I'm just waiting for the day that I get an email from the guy that's had this prototype sitting in a little glass case for all the world to see how cool he/she is and one day they decide to put on the white gloves and plug that puppy in and it doesn't work. Then they'll come crying to me to fix it. Sorry...it's toast and there's nothing that can be done to bring it back from the dead.

One last word about my prototype buddy before I go. As much as I hate to admit it, the stuff he has is real and you'll undoubtedly see more from him on eBay in the future. He does have more than one copy of each of the unreleased titles so there's no need to get real crazy with them as he'll surely be selling the others as well.

Last but not least, go read the Classic Gaming Expo ad in this issue. The dates for the show have been set and it's going to be a blast! Most all of the DP staff will be there and if you missed it last year because (sniff sniff) Las Vegas is too far away or (boo hoo) it's too expensive or (wimper wimper) this hobby isn't supposed to be "commercial". Get a life, save up your pennies, and get your ass out to Vegas this July! Classic Gaming Expo is EXACTLY what this hobby is all about - getting in touch with people just like you. There is no other place on the planet where you will find a larger gathering of people that are into the exact same thing as you!

Back on the Silver Screen (for a limited time only)

By Roloff de Jeu

As a movie trailer (on film) collector, I tend to pick up trailers I like, mostly on eBay, mostly Sci-Fi ones. Recently, by total luck, my two greatest hobbies clashed together into one of the coolest and rarest items a collectoholic like me can own: a theatrical commercial on 35mm for the ATARI 2600, as the auction stated. The force was with me (and my furious persistence to own this piece of history), so I picked it up for only a day's salary (must-have items sometimes do not come cheap). Being a pervert and not scared to show off my offbeat sense for things cool, yet "who-is-this-freak-and-where-does-he-get-this-stuff", I occasionally showcase my trailers in a compilation reel, to the public of the art house I volunteer at. Last December, after the fin-du-siècle main feature STRANGE DAYS, I projected my 'The Night of the Living Trailer' show, and the 15 visitors (of which 8 were volunteers, yes) loved it. One of the most memorable things to them (and me) was the VCS spot. See if you remember this stunning piece of cinema-art, or go nuts hoping you will ever get to see it, as I'll describe it to you. The ad from '83 runs over 2 minutes, is on 35mm (Eastman LPP safety) and FLAT 1.85:1, hard-matted (film collectors slang).

A guy sitting in his cubicle at a desk is bored to death. Then a fly forces him to wonder off into a wonderful hallucination of blown-up sprites! Isolated from clerk-life he sits on his chair in a dark place, trying to grab what now has become the Qotile from YARS REVENGE. Other great and stunning icons from ASTEROIDS, CENTIPEDE and STAR RAIDERS pass over his head as he mumbles pure poetry devoted to the games. The sprites are animated with state-of-the-art rotoscope, airbrush and slit-scan motion-control animation techniques (Visual Effects artist slang) we all know from TRON, 7-Up commercials, ABC & San Francisco 49ers KRON-TV4 station calls. The sprites move from the second into the third dimension, the music gets on your nerves, and the dude is obviously traumatized by too much stick wiggling. This is eye candy at its retroest, a true graphical animation-porn fest and will make true Atarians cry of joy. When the manifestation of utter 8-bit glory comes to it's climax, the screen fades to black, and the viewer is teased with a "Coming Soon for the ATARI 2600: E.T. THE EXTRA TERRESTRIAL"-tag and a pack-shot of the VCS and the proper logos.

For those of you that just did go nuts, I work at a visual effects/postproduction studio where we often have film transferred (with a telecine-scanner, but not in-house), and I hope to master my proudest possession to D-1 or DigiBeta tape (PAL) and then convert it to a multimedieval file, and a number of screenshots, viewable by anyone in the world.

For now the trailer is sitting on my "Return of the Living Trailer" presentation reel, and I will screen it as soon as we run another Sci-Fi film. It's sandwiched between the trailers for TRON and CLOAK & DAGGER...

Emulation: Getting a Fair Shake?

By Russ Perry, Jr.

It strikes me that emulation is often misunderstood, and even maligned, in gaming media. Incorrect or inflammatory information seems to roll from manufacturer to media to gamers. For the most part, the magazines will admit they have little problem with emulators for old, obsolete systems, but when it comes to newer systems, they have to temper their opinions a bit, or maybe even follow the party line.

So far, there are two emulators available that have been causing havoc, Bleem! by Bleem! (for PC), and Virtual Game Station by Connectix (for Macintosh). Though there are Nintendo 64 emulators out there, and even the beginnings of Dreamcast emulation, they've so far remained underneath the radar since none of them have been released as commercial products. Both Bleem! and Connectix have been sued by Sony, and though reviews of these products don't seem to be unfair, some of the commentary about them does seem a bit misguided, or misleading. Examples and commentary follow...

Bleem! Attacked For The Wrong Reasons

Back in the July 1999 issue (volume 4, issue 8), PS Extreme printed "A Candid Conversation With The Creators of Bleem!" (pages 40-42). In the intro there were some phrases that hint at bias... "[Emulators] were typically hard to configure and buggy to the point that some were unplayable" (at least they wrote "some"); "currently the legal status of emulators is in question" (no, only CERTAIN emulators); "since the early emulators could only run the pirated ROM images [...]" (total BS! they could run ANY ROM; the fact that most WERE pirated has no bearing on what they COULD run), "[...] emulation quickly became synonymous with piracy" (what manufacturers wanted you to believe and some sources stated or implied).

On the other hand, the intro also had some positive bits (like "we'd like to see the gaming industry give emulation a fair chance"; in truth, they have when they sell the emulators themselves) and the interview with Bleem! CEO David Herpolsheimer is pretty honest and open. Read the bit about E3 and Sony's Nazi-like response to Bleem!'s booth, and see if you have any sympathy for Sony. David also has a pretty good answer about the piracy issue...

Then, in the September 1999 issue, they printed a letter from one Patrick Calderaz, in response to the interview, which stated certain opinions that bothered me enough to respond. My letter was published in the October 1999 issue (volume 4, issue 11), with a bit of a hand-waving response from the editor. Let's revisit what Patrick said, why I objected, and what PS Extreme's final response was...

First, Patrick complained that "Sony loses out on the hardware that that would normally be required to play the game". He acknowledged that "the games may sell more...", but he doesn't seem to understand that manufacturers do not make much profit from selling systems. In other words, if someone buys Bleem! instead of a Playstation, Sony hasn't really lost all that much, especially if that person wasn't going to buy a Playstation anyway. But now, that person may be tempted to buy Playstation games instead of PC games (else why purchase Bleem!?), which Sony DOES make good money on, due to the licensing structure of game publishing. For every game sold for Playstation, Sony gets a cut, and most people buy at least 5 games for their system. There is no reason to suspect Bleem! users won't buy as many games as other gamers, so I believe that Sony, on a whole, benefits far more from Bleem! than they lose.

Patrick goes on to say "a problem with the emulators is [that] we don't have laws that target them directly (well, we don't yet. Hopefully that will change)". Yikes! This is a noxious opinion to me... We already have laws that cover piracy - if you use an emulator to play pirated games, you're doing so illegally - but there's nothing illegal with the emulator itself, nor should there be. We don't NEED new laws.

The editor's reply to my points? "[Bleem!] isn't all that great, anyway. The number of games you could actually sit down and play, start to finish, glitch-free [...] could be counted on one hand".

Ah, but isn't that what a review of Bleem! in the August 1999 issue (volume 4, issue 9) said, not in so many words, but definitely relating that there are problems with it? So, why was this brought up to answer my letter rebutting misconceptions about emulation in general? It seems as though they just waved my opinions aside rather than accept or debate them, which I suppose is fine if they thought they stood on their own, but it more seemed to be just a bit of waving me off instead. Saying it's not a good product misdirects a bit from I was trying to say. To be fair though, their answer to Patrick's letter was more direct and DID make some similar points to mine.

EGM Didn't Want To Print My Letter, So I Will

[My original letter to EGM follows in its entirety]

I'm afraid I must wholeheartedly disagree with your Final Word column [page 138] in EGM 117 [April 1999]. I might have put the whole thing down to an opinion until I read the caption: "Emulation is a cool idea - but it's not so cool when it could kill the gaming industry".

This is so patently false as to completely invalidate any points the article might otherwise makes. The fact of the matter is that if anything even CAN kill the gaming industry, it is piracy. Do not confuse the two!

The editorial seems to boil down to the fact that emulators allow you to play illegally copied ROM dumps, and therefore emulation is a bad thing. To follow this logic, you would also be able to say that since the Playstation allows you to play illegal pirated CDRs, that the Playstation could kill the gaming industry.

This is a stupid statement, and it is just as stupid to say the same about emulators. Though we all know that some people use emulators to play games they don't otherwise own, the emulator itself is not illegal, nor is it even a threat to the industry. The fact that the industry itself uses and even occasionally sells emulators should point out that there's nothing inherently wrong with them.

Connectix's Video Game Station is obviously the lynch pin here, and I'm not seeing the support it deserves. Sony, a company that makes money off of every game sold due to its licensing program, is not happy about the ability to play their games on another platform? Traditionally system manufacturers don't make much, if any, money off of hardware, so Sony can't be too concerned about lost hardware sales, not to mention that no one is going to buy a Mac JUST to play Playstation games when the system is only $130. And here's the thing — the VGS is made to play off the CD-ROM drive, and features the same protections against foriegn discs and CDRs that the Playstation does, so it not only doesn't encourage piracy, it prevents it.

Okay, so some hackers came along and made a patch that can cause the VGS to play foreign games and CDRs — are we to blame the emulator for that? I should say not — if we do, then we must also again blame the Playstation

because some hackers made chips and add-on modules that allow you to play foreign games and CDRs.

All this pointing the blame at Connectix and their emulator is as idiotic as blaming Sony and the Playstation. Please, let's stop and just learn to enjoy our games.

If anyone SHOULD be targeted for lawsuits, it should be the pirates – and I don't mean the guys who put up some Atari 2600 ROMs for free, I mean the people who SELL current system's games. There's no grey area there, and yet that's NOT what Sony is focusing on, at least not in the public eye. That's ridiculous.

[I missed one thing though... The author, Shawn Smith, states at one point "Nintendo 64 and Game Boy [...] games [...] are on cartridge, making retail emulators illegal from the get-go – you'd have to use pirated ROM images". How many times do I have to say it? That does NOT make the emulator illegal, though in this case it would either pointless or suicidal to release it. On the other hand, this has already been done, sort of. What does Shawn think the GB Blaster is? It's a cartridge adaptor for the Playstation with emulation to play Game Boy games, and no ROM images required due to the hardware part. It's still an emulator if there's any software required at all, it just requires some additional hardware, which the makers include. What if someone made a Nintendo 64 emulator for PC, but it would only run if it saw the included cartridge adaptor on the parallel port, and therefore required a cartridge to play -- would Nintendo sue? I'll be they would anyway.]

Hmm, Another Ziff-Davis Publication Takes A Different Tack

The March 1999 issue of Official US Playstation Magazine also rips on emulators... Or more precisely, the people they perceive will use it. I knew right away this one was going to be trouble, as Kraig Kujawa's quote at the top of the editorial (page 6) says "By donning the taped-up glasses," – indeed, he did don them for the accompanying photo - "I have gotten one step closer to becoming one of the target customers of the Playstation emulator for the Macintosh." Excuse me?

Kraig ponders "Who in the hell wants to play Playstation games on a computer screen?", but I wonder why he sees fit to put a whole editorial together to ask that. If I were the paranoid type, I might suggest that the "Official" part is trying to spin the idea of an emulator in another way - 'you'd be silly to use a computer to play Playstation games'. The whole thing comes down to character assassination.

He asks "Does anyone really want to play a four-player game while they're sitting around a cramped desk with a 17-inch monitor?". Geez, Kraig, maybe they have a 21-inch monitor, maybe their desk isn't that cramped, and maybe they only use it for one-player games. Hell, I'm surprised he brought up four-player games instead of accusing potential VGS users of not having any friends, given the general tone of this piece.

Kraig ends by suggesting that the emulator isn't going to impress anyone but the "greasy-haired geek whose mouth waters at the prospect", but "why would you care about impressing that guy anyway?". Hell, I think emulators are neat, so should I be offended that he's implying that I am a greasy-haired geek with taped-up glasses? Or should I just think he's kind of an ass, possibly a knave in Sony's service, and get on to enjoying my games, emulated or not?

The Case Of The Connectix Virtual Game Station

A while back Gamespot talked to Riley Russell, Sony's legal counsel, about Sony's lawsuit against Connectix, which alleged seven illegal acts. However, one of these was called "circumvention of technical protection measures". This refers to the lockout system on the Playstation, but I don't think there are actually any laws that this falls under, since it's not like Connectix is modifying the Playstation itself. I also don't recall Sony suing any of the manufacturers of the hardware to do the same thing.

Russell mentioned a patch for VGS that allows it to play pirated and foreign discs, to which he said "It really hurts that you can play counterfeit games". Now this is a non-issue if I ever heard one! First off, Connectix did not develop that patch, nor do they endorse it (in fact, version 1.1 of VGS added measures to protect AGAINST the use of foreign discs or CDRs) -- so why does he mention it in relation to the lawsuit Sony filed? And why doesn't he acknowledge that it's just as easy to play these discs on a real Playstation anyway? It's not like VGS somehow makes piracy easier, after all.

The thing I don't understand is that he says they wouldn't even license a "perfect emulator", but says at one point "Our interest is the PlayStation and producing good software for that hardware... and we would take action against anyone who releases an emulator for profit". Even a perfect one? Why? It would BE good software (look up the definition of perfect, Mr. Russell). Despite what he says, it's obvious that it's all really about who profits, not about quality.

Please, Sony, Treat Emulators In A Rational Fashion

So, how can I assert that emulators are legal? Well, first off, tools used to do illegal things are not automatically illegal. If I use a screwdriver to break into your house, I've broken a couple laws, but owning a screwdriver is not one of them. If I hit you with a hammer, I've committed assault and battery, but there's nothing illegal about owning the hammer. Owning a car is legal, no matter how often I speed. But many in the gaming industry (and seemingly, also the IDSA, who should know better, but appears to bow before big money every time) would seem to imply otherwise. I am aware of no court cases that act as precedent that emulators are illegal.

In fact, there is some precedence to the contrary! Although the cases I'm aware of dealt with hardware, reverse-engineering applies to emulators as well. Reverse-engineering is taking a working item and figuring out HOW it works to make improved items, or compatible items. Reverse-engineering is quite common, and it leads to much innovation. The important thing is that it be done properly, and that patented information not be used in resulting products, which is the trick.

In the old days, this came up a few times, most notably when Coleco released their Expansion Module #1 for the ColecoVision. Since the Module allowed you to play 2600 games, Atari immediately sued Coleco, but the court found that Coleco did not violate any Atari patents in producing it. Fact is, Coleco had reverse-engineered the 2600 to figure out how it worked, then created their own system to work the same way, without doing it the way Atari did.

Now, I ask you, what is an emulator? It does the same thing Expansion Module #1 did, only it does it via software instead of hardware. The engineers at Bleem! looked at a Playstation to see how it works, then created a program that could do the same thing on a PC. Sony has definitely ACCUSED Bleem! of stealing Sony technology, but so far they haven't been able to prove it, and it looks to me that Bleem! properly reverse-engineered the system and is on perfectly legal ground. So far, the courts agree.

It galls me that Sony is probably spending more effort and money trying to stop Bleem! and Virtual Game Station with no real legal reason to (actually, in the case of VGS, there are allegations that it was not properly reverse-engineered and MAY contain some Sony proprietary information, but that has yet to be proven) than trying to prevent actual piracy (games on CDR for instance), which IS illegal, no ifs, ands or buts.

It also bothers me that emulation has been packaged and sold by game makers before, but when a third party does it (i.e. the emulator maker does not own or package any games with the emulator), they strike out blindly with lawyers aplenty. That stinks of hypocrisy to me. Where was the outcry about Activision emulating 2600 games? Oh, but they paid the licensing fee for the Playstation product, and didn't have to pay licensing fees for the PC and Mac versions. Hmm. What it seems to come down to is that Sony is galled that they can't get money from Bleem! and VGS directly, whether or not they realize that it'll do them financial good to have their games available on another platform. Corporate greed and legal bullying, as always.

Come on Sony, give emulation a fair shake even when you can't control it, and attack those that truly ARE doing harm to the industry.

WHY "RETRO" IS COOL

By Larry Anderson

The dictionary definition of the word "retro":

ret·ro (rĕt'rō)
adj. Involving, relating to, or reminiscent of things past; retrospective: "As is often the case in retro fashion, historical accuracy is somewhat beside the point" (New York Times).n., pl. ret·ros. A fashion, decor, design, or style reminiscent of things past.

As has so often been the case during my tenure as a classic game collector, when trying to describe to the average Joe (not of the Santulli variety) what it is I collect, I often use the term "retrogames". Seems like a pretty good way to describe the hobby… Retro implies old, games implies entertainment (we'll save "waste of productive time" and "mind-numbing" for another article). Old entertainment?? Visions of nursing home residents trying to do the Limbo?? Screaming things about falling down and not being able to get up??

I certainly hope not!

To try and give some sense of a point to this discourse, let me first say that the inspiration for this story came from one of many discussions amongst my peers about terms used in the press/general public to label our collectibles. I disagree with the people who don't think that the word "retro" is a cool way to describe classic games (you people know EXACTLY who you are). But, before I COMPLETELY destroy their point of view, I thought I'd be fair and give the opposing side some say as to what the term "retro" means to them, and explain a little bit about my own position… and perhaps, by the end of this article, you might agree with me. If not, well, I'll still respect you in the morning (grin).

What does "retro" mean to everyone else?Let us first turn to the uneducated masses to get their opinion on this phenomenon… I mean uneducaled in sense that they're not as hip as we are by collecting old video games!! Here are some references to the word "retro" I've seen or heard in recent months:

"retro"-active, usually in reference to one's paycheck, as in "where's that raise you promised me 6 months ago??""retro"-spective, as in "Why the heck did I pass up that $1 PC-Engine LT at the flea market??" or "Here's an interesting article all about things retro, that really got me thinking about that old Cabbage Patch Kid I had…""retro"-fit, i. e. "I retrofitted my PC to handle that new version of MAME that just came out…"

All of these descriptions/definitions refer to something that people are into or concerned about from a point in time that has already passed. Now you might say, "what's wrong with the word "classic"?" Not a thing! I hear about classic cars, classic music, classic books, etc. all the time. But when I think classic, I don't necessarily think cool; classic implies something a little more formal, a little more

stately. "Retro" has a much more casual feel to it; casual like sitting in front of the TV playing a video game right after getting out of bed on a Saturday morning.

Simple enough; yet I still don't understand why "retro" is so uncool! So forward we blaze towards the path of clarity…

What does "retro" mean to me?At about the same time I first got exposed to video games, my father was into drag racing and hopping up old cars (that passion certainly benefit me on my 17th birthday, but that's the subject for yet ANOTHER article)… so the first thing that comes to my mind when I think retro is old cars. Intrinsically cool to look at, wonderful to hear as they rumble down the road, awe-inspiring as they lay rubber down on the pavement.I also think of retro as referring to a time when things were much simpler, much less complicated… when our youthful attention was easily captured by a small yellow dot gobbling ghosts, instead of a perfectly rendered polygonal Japanese samurai… a time when companies like Atari covered acres of Silicon Valley real estate… a time when a couple guys in their garage could start a major personal computer company… a time when neon lights and music by the likes of Journey, The Go-Go's, Thomas Dolby and Oingo Boingo filled arcades… places where we willingly sank loads of quarters into machines to gobble yet one more ghost, rescue one more humanoid, blast one more asteroid. (I'm getting teary-eyed just thinking about all this stuff!)I also think that there's a certain coolness associated to the word "retro". Kinda like looking at Snoopy in his Joe Cool outfit; laid back, casual, caring not what's going on around him, only into what's happening in his own "scene".

What's so "retro" about our hobby?So how does all of this nonsense apply to us in the classic gaming community? We all share the same love of games and entertainment that was produced many years ago. Most of the collectors I know are in their late 20's to early 30's, and are just getting to the age when we tend to spend a little more time reflecting (being "retro"-spective) on our past. That's the one fact that is inescapable; these games/systems were all produced 15+ years ago… maybe not quite "retro" by "retro" standards ("retro" is typically used to describe stuff from the 1950's/1960's), but older nonetheless.Besides that, I can't think of any other word that better describes electronics clad in faux-woodgrain cabinets (ever see the "genuine simulated woodgrain" sticker on the side of an Atari Video Music?) than "retro"!

The Point (tm)In conclusion, I defend the use of the word "retro" in reference to early '80's videogames. It's not a bad word like "old", it's not a condescending word like "dumb", it's not an over-used word like "classic"… At worst, it could be said to be slightly inaccurate, but that's an opinion, and I'm entitled to my own! Be that as it may, classic gamers everywhere should be encouraged to take up the banner,

what is mame-d?

Interview by Roloff de Jeu

So the Gameboy Camera received the prestigious "Toy of the Year" award in the Netherlands. Don't make us laugh! Why not get a real camera and a play real games! Steep price? Well save up, paper boy! No games for your digital camera? Sure there are. Get it MA-MED.

James Surine is the brave soul who made gaming available for happy-snap instant jpeggers that have some time to kill. James got interested in Digital Cameras and got himself a Kodak DC265, a camera that runs under a programmable Operating System, Digita. This of course with some influence from his employee, Flash-Point (The company responsible for the Digita OS). To put his programming skills to the test and see what the possibilities and limitations of the camera were, he first ported the Multipac Macintosh Pac-Man emulator. Then after some free hours and weekends of compiling and debugging James managed to get the whole Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator to run on Digita with sound and full-color graphics! The results of this can be downloaded on his web page and have been by many enthusiasts. His unusual but awesome port has been featured in many online and offline magazines (WIRED, Pocket Magazine from France, Famitsu Wave from Japan, Next Generation, Edge from the UK..) Nevertheless, DP's Roloff could come up with some unasked questions and was honored to interview James.

When did you get into classic gaming? Has it been with you since you were a kid, or did you pick it up recently?
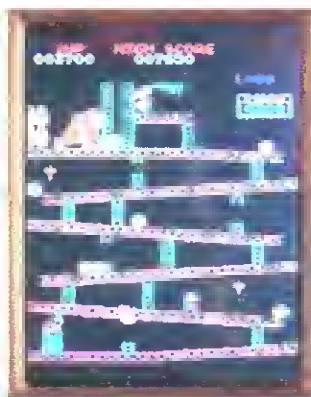
Well I've been in it since I was a kid learning how to program the Apple // computers. I guess I never really left. I wrote a simple file converter program for Apple // emulators some years ago called easy convert, and I also wrote a simple Pac-Man desk accessory simulation for the Apple // GS. That's about all the public stuff I've done before MAMED. I own a couple of full-sized arcades as well. I also have quite a few consoles with carts and CDs and I have many PC and Mac video games, but I don't play them nearly as much as I would like to. I like Turok and Quake but I also like Xevious and Donkey Kong.

Can you give an estimate of people playing MAMEd and MESSd?

I don't have accurate counts, but on my new web site I should be able to get better data [80000 hits]. My guess is that there are about

Above: okay, it's Donkey Kong. Below: but it's running on a digital camera!

1000-2000 active downloaders now, since I get that many more hits when I post an update. I suspect between 5000-10000 people have actually tried it at least once. It sure caused quite a stir when it was first released [Oct 23, 1999].

Are the interfaces of the camera's still in the way of good emulation play?

I don't really make much use of the camera functions, I try to take over the system as much as possible. I still have to allow a little OS processing so that button HW (hardware) can be processed. I can understand the difficulties the MAME CE people are having with their OS.

Any chance of the manufacturers putting more buttons on the cameras as the number of apps and uses for them grow? Would a USB joystick/joypad-like device be an option?

The problem with adding a USB device is that it requires a USB master. Most portable devices do not come with HW that supports being a USB master. There is some primitive support for USB master on Kodak's HW but it requires a great deal of code to support it. I would probably look at adding a serial or PS2 type device first since serial doesn't require anything special. It would definitely be nice to be able to add attachments to the camera for this sort of thing.

Disregarding price and availability, and it's quality in taking pictures, which current camera is the ultimate game console, and why?

Well, digital cameras are not designed with multi-use in mind, hopefully that will change in the future, the Kodak ones seem to be about the best for this application. They have the nicest joypad, fit in your hand well and have reasonably good buttons, and they come with sound. Manufactures of these kinds of devices need to make their devices able to do multiple things, i.e. a camera used as a game console or an MP3 player. They could} design the device for the primary function but don't preclude its use for something else, spend the extra few dollars for the HW and design to do good sound or heavy use joypad and buttons, etc. Sell it as a camera but if you do it right you can also sell it as an MP3 player and game console or anything people come up with. People will spend the extra bucks for the added functionality. But you must have an OS that is accessible for to people to program.

Have you ever had official reactions from the manufacturers? Are all of them as exited and supportive about the many applications being written, or do some of them see it as hacking?

Most of them don't really understand what MAMED is or how it can help them sell more cameras. What response I have gotten from camera manufactures has been positive though. I bet I received over 100 e-mails from people buying a Kodak DC290 for Christmas just because it ran MAMED.

Did you hook up your Digita to a TV and play MAMEd yet and what was the result?

You can, just insert the AV jack, normally you use the display rotated cause most games are rotated, but you can adjust that with the menus. The problem then becomes the screen is clipped on the top and bottom when you play the game vertical. I added a hi-res interlaced mode to double the vertical resolution so you can see the whole screen when you play these games vertical. It still has a little trouble switching back to the LCD after you remove the AV jack.

You succeeded recently in porting MESS for Digita. About the only console not supported in MESS is the ATARI 2600, my favorite. Any chance of you porting the STELLA emulator? I mean there's a console that really seems appropriate to port!

Actually MESS has code for the Atari 2600 but is not stable or functional enough to enable in the core yet. I chose both MAME and MESS because it gives the most bang for the buck. Basically I could do one port and get everything that is supported by these two great emulators. There may be faster and better emulators of particular machines but I don't have the time to port them all. I suspect MAME and MESS will outlive any other existing emulator because of their future potential, existing emulators or their descendants will probably eventually be rolled into MAME and MESS or its descendant's. I will leave it up to someone else to attempt ports of these more specialized emulators.

What are you working on now, any goals for the not too distant future?

I'm trying to get MAME and MESS up and running on the DCAM processor-based camera's, the Minolta 1500 EX and the HP C500 Photosmart. The MAME sound core also changed quite a bit and I have to recode. I'd like to do a port of DOOM sometime and also it would be nice to have a keyboard of some kind attached to the serial port to run MESS. I'd also like to help some others develop code for the camera. Two people have already successfully compiled my multipac source using the gcc compiler available on the internet for free.

Check out James Surwine's brand new domain with MAME and Mess for Digita Enabled Cameras at http://digita.mamed.net to read more and download the most recent versions. MAMED and MESSD run on the following available cams: Kodak DC220, 260, 265 and 290, Minolta Dimage 1500 EX and 1500 3D and HP's C500 Photosmart.

hear my call and spread the joy of RETRO-gaming to everyone! Grab one of your non RETRO game-collecting friends this weekend, sit them in front of your RETRO Atari 2600, and playing a one-on-one game of RETRO Combat (oh, *wait*, that game isn't scheduled to come out until 2010)… and when they ask you what you call yourself, tell them that you're a "RETRO-gamer". When they raise their eyebrow at you in confusion, simply refer them to this article and I'll set them straight.

Now THAT, is a very, very cool thing.

NEW RELEASES FROM CYBERPUNKS
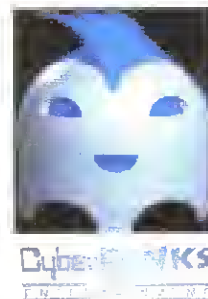
By Russ Perry, Jr.

Back in 1996, the CyberPuNKS [which I am a part of] released a compilation of the Starpath Supercharger games on CD, called Stella Gets A New Brain. A limited number (under 400) were produced, and they sold out in a number of months. In the time since, the Cyber-PuNKS have been busy trying to come up with other projects, and now they are proud to release two more.

The first release is Version 2.0 of Stella Gets A New Brain, so those who missed out on the first release (or can't afford the $52.50-$365 they've been selling for on eBay) can finally get their hands on it.

For the most part, Version 2.0 is the same as the original: all of the Starpath games (including unreleased stuff) and previews, as well as a CD-ROM portion with scans of the game boxes, cassette labels and instructions, as well as development tools to create new 2600 games, and Ed Federmeyer's SoundX.

However, this edition has been expanded a bit as well. There are new development tools, oodles of source code, an archive of the Stellalist (2600 programming mailing list) posts, scans of old arcade game flyers, VCS design notes, scans of the TIA (the 2600's television interface) chip plot, and even a song called "Atari 2600" by the band Splitsville. PAL versions of Survival Island and the Party Mix preview have been included which were missing last time.

For this edition Polo (and the Vectrex images and BINs) could not be included, but a number of hobbyist games have been included instead: Oystron & OystronX, Mondo Pong, INV, Okie Dokie and This Planet Sucks, as well as BINs of Mark's Sound Tool and Tetris26, and source code for Stell-A-Sketch.

The full-color CD insert and booklet cover are actually the same as those from the original release, but the 32 page booklet contents are new and contain instructions for playing all the Supercharger games, as well as SoundX and Oystron.

There are also some preview pictures included from the CyberPuNKS second new release, a videotape documentary of designing for the 2600, called Stella At 20.

Stella At 20 was filmed on August 23, 1997, 20 years after the VCS was released, at Nolan Bushnell's mansion (and other places), and Volume Two (don't worry, Volume One hasn't been re-leased yet) is now available.

On "One Person, One Game", Al Miller, David Crane, Larry Kaplan, Carol Shaw, Larry Wagner, Bob Smith, Dennis Koble, Tod Frye, Rick Maurer, Rob Fulop and Steve DeFrisco talk about their histories and game design issues behind the games they programmed (Surround, Basketball, Starmaster, Canyon Bomber, Dragster, Pitfall, Decathlon, Pitfall II, Kaboom, Polo, River Raid, Video Chess, Dragonfire, Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Save Mary!, Missile Command, Secret Quest, Moto Rodeo, Klax and others). There are also cameos by Nolan Bushnell and some of the hardware designers.

The tape is 1 hour and 20 minutes long, and Volume One should be available in the near future. There may be a Volume Three if there is sufficient demand, and perhaps a Volume Four if future interviews are completed as were originally planned.

Stella Gets A New Brain Version 2.0 and Stella At 20: One Person, One Game are $30 each, postage $3 (add $1.50 for each additional copy). If you order both, there's a $10 discount (this doesn't apply to multiple copies of one item, but only to any pair of SGANB2 and S@20 ordered); in other words, to order one would cost $33 total, both would be $54.50 (but two copies of either would be $64.50). There may be other discounts for bigger orders as described on the CyberPuNKS web page, but those are the base costs.

Ordering address:
Cyberpunks Entertainment PMB 111 2029 Verdugo Blvd. Montrose, CA 91020-1626

Questions?: cybpunks@earthlink.net

The main CyberPuNKS web page (the first two URLs are redirectors, and the last URL is the actual address the redirectors should take you to, in case they don't) is at:
http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/1698/cyberpunks/index.html

Interactive order form:
http://www.cyberpunks.uni.cc/order.html

Stella Gets A New Brain and Stella At 20 preview pages:
http://www.cyberpunks.uni.cc/stellagetsbrain2.html http://www.cyberpunks.uni.cc/stellaat20_2.html

There is also an article about CyberPuNKS and these projects on GameSpot:
http://headline.gamespot.com/news/99_10/01_vg_stella/index.html

Best of Both Worlds

same guy asking for a quarter in an arcade will get nothing! That quarter is worth a fortune within the walls of the mighty arcade.) Many players may embrace this aspect of the home game room, but at the same time, must acknowledge that while not necessarily detracting from the gameplay, it seems to take that extra "edge" off. A great game at home won't be ruined by some snot-nosed kid unplugging the machine, or by the "sorry, we're closing down" power shutoff at the end of the night, when you're racing against the clock to save the Princess on the last level of Super Mario Bros for the first time… The home gamer, playing a lengthy game of Gauntlet, will never need to run across the room to feed another Abe to the change machine and back to the game faster than the speed of sound in order to continue. Home gamers even lose the sense of satisfaction gained by inscribing their initials atop the high score table that displays their gaming-greatness for all the world to see.

Remember Konami's "Crime Fighters"?? If not, it's a standard Double Dragon "me too!" game that started Konami's quest to crank out as many cookie-cutter, four-player "absurdly difficult quarter-thieves" as it could, including Vendetta, TMNT, TMNT2, The Simpsons, X-Men, and others. When Crime Fighters arrived at our local arcade, two of my friends and I spent the better part of an afternoon, and the better part of our wallets, in front of the machine. At some point, we were joined by the most obnoxious, spoiled rotten eleven year old brat this side of the Kathie Lee kids, who was busy juggling an ice-cream cone, headphones, and a bike. Punk-kid felt the need to scream instructions at the top of his lungs to the three of us upon joining the team.

There's a point in Crime Fighters where a pistol brandishing criminal appears. If a player can knock the pistol free, he or she may recover it and use it against the bad guys… Or other players. Mr. gun-guy appeared, cueing punk-ass kid to begin screeching, "Get the gun! Get the gun!!" as though he was being attacked by Cujo right there in the arcade. Naturally, your compassionate author, under the strict orders of ice-cream cone kid, proceeded to obtain the gun, and continuously "shoot" his on screen alter-ego until he was vanquished. We all had a good laugh over that one, selfish bastards that we are, but let's face it, the kid was quite literally begging for it. The moral of the story? As annoying as the kid was, he added the "x-factor" to the game that only the arcade can provide, and we all had a better time playing the game than we would have if "Punky Rudester" never showed up. Ever play Crime Fighters by yourself? I'm all in favor of the time honored video game technique of stomping bad guys while they're on the ground, but after five minutes or so, it's about as much fun as Sssnake on the 2600.

I'd wager that we all have similar anecdotes about the arcade down the block, ranging from kids swiping your "on-deck quarter" from the game, to actual fist fights between those two guys who were ALWAYS sitting at Street Fighter, then Mortal Kombat, then Killer Instinct, then Tekken. You know who those guys are, EVERY arcade has them. No matter how intense, or how trivial, those stories are or were, they are a part of the arcade experience, and no matter how good emulation technology gets, it can't reproduce them. For better, or for worse. Probably for better.

The arcade experience cannot be recreated, emulated, or dupli-

cated. However, with emulators, we can still play all those great games in the privacy of our homes, day or night, street clothes, or pajamas, or even naked if the air conditioning is broken on one of those hot summer nights. Does emulation give us the best of both worlds? Maybe. How else could you play all of your favorite games in one place, without the help of a time machine? My local arcade has Donkey Kong, and Pac-Man, and Robotron: 2084, but it doesn't have Gaplus. Or Burgertime. Or Super Pac-Man. Or Xevious. If I stay home though, I can fire up the Playstation and play all of these games and more. I guess I'll just keep on playing some games at the arcade, and some games at home – heaven right here on earth.

standards by which all others must be measured! Pesco comes with a full-color glossy label on the cartridge which is superior to many of the ones used by Atari and other companies back in their heyday. The color instruction manual presents a short story about the adventures of Pesco along with the basic player's guide. Pesco even comes packaged in a full-color box which fits in nicely with other games in your collection and includes promotional cards for the company and its other games. Attention to details like this are important to classic game players and collectors, and Ebivision really shines in this area.

As with any game there are some drawbacks, however with Pesco they are very minor. The most noticeable is the lack of sound. Other than the noise that Pesco makes when eating the plankton, there really isn't any sound in the game. I'm not going to criticize to harshly in this area because it's very possible that there are other factors involved like a lack of coding space due to the cartridge size. Add in the fact that this game is 100 times better than anything I could hope to achieve in my lifetime, and you can see why I'm being lenient.

Some other minor complaints include the nine level limit in the game. I would think since the maze is the same, that after completing the ninth level (yea, right) the game could just keep repeating it and continue on. Again, I don't know the behind the scenes reality of making this happen so I can't be too critical. Finally, the box is a bit too flimsy. It seems to be made of thick paper stock but I'm actually afraid to handle it too much for fear that it will get damaged. I don't know a solution to this problem, I just know that it makes me nervous.

Pesco is an Atari 2600 owner's dream, a GREAT game in a GREAT package. The amount of work that went into this game is surely immeasurable. Pesco will definitely keep you coming back to play over and over. When was the last time you found a 2600 game you could say that about? Here's something to think about: If Eric had released this game package right before Atari released their version of Pac-Man, there is no doubt that he would be a very wealthy man today.

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Some video game publications pride themselves on being there "first". We're a little different. Since Digital Press readers consist primarily of multi-system owners of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of game cartridges, our world has become one where time means nothing. Atari 2600 and Sony Play-station games can be reviewed on the same page. We are fans of gaming, not of any particular system. Do you have a constant desire to play? Then join us - subscribe now! It's just ten bucks for six issues.

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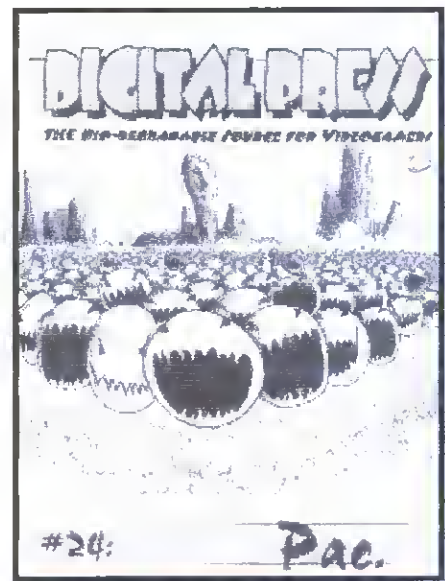
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NOTE-WORTHY

HOME COMPUTER & VIDEO NEWS

CLASSIFIED

Volume 1, No. 1 October 1984

From the archives

Want to get an idea of just how long DP staff member Al Backiel has been collecting? Check out this classified ad found in Home Computer & Video News from October 1984! Looking for games like Master Builder, Z-Tack and Mangia back then actually got you results (Al's got them), while other games turned out not to be as rare as Al thought back then (Gopher and Firefly).

Got an old classified ad with your name in it? If you've got one prior to 1990 and you send a reasonable facsimile we'll give you a free year of Digital Press. Heck, that means you're as hardcore as they come. You deserve something for that.

CLASSIFIED

WANTED TO BUY Atari 2600 cartridges—I am a collector who is looking for the rarer cartridges such as Kyphus, Gopher, Firefly, Sweat, Galactic, Tactic, Master Builder, Fun, Mangia, Z-Tack, etc. I am also very interested in any 3-D games also Mail Plane, Dark Tower, Bobby... I need I make you a decent offer. Al Backiel, 253 Rock Road, Ridgewood, NJ 07450